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In memory of Raquel Albarrán, a loving friend, leader and scholar

By RACHEL LU
Editor at Large

COURTESY PHOTO

Raquel Albarrán was an assistant professor of Luso-Hispanic studies and is remembered as a loving friend, passionate community leader and revolutionary scholar.

Assistant Professor of Luso-Hispanic Studies Raquel Albarrán is remembered as a loving friend, passionate community leader and a revolutionary scholar.

Raquel passed away on Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2022, due to natural causes. At the time of her death, she was on a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship as a Visiting Scholar at Rutgers Advanced Institute for Critical Caribbean Studies.

Raquel grew up in Puerto Rico. Her father Miguel Albarrán said he knew Raquel was different ever since she was a child. Unlike other kids who babbled words, Raquel's first words were a full sentence. He remembered her saying, "papi se fue" — in English, "Daddy left."

"Raquel read and wrote before going to kindergarten. I was a university teacher, and when I used to do work at home, she used to bring her little desk and sit by me and just imitate. She started writing her name, knowing the letters and communicating," Miguel said. "She used to say that it's funny that what she does is what she's been doing since she was a little kid, but now she gets paid for that."

Miguel used the expression "when perfection is not enough" to describe Raquel as a student who wanted to excel in every aspect. He recalled that during Raquel's junior high school graduation, Raquel was not only a graduating student, but she was also the master of the ceremony and sang in the choir.

Raquel attended the Universidad de Puerto Rico in San Juan, Puerto Rico where she majored in biochemistry and human nutrition. In 2004, she did an internship in Peru to study the breast feeding patterns of Andean women in Peru. In an interview she did with the University of Washington's Spanish and Portuguese Studies Department while she was a professor there, Raquel recalled the awakening she had while conducting the research.

"Our study was overlooking the power relations involved in data collection, and the larger cultural context of the research," Raquel said. "I was interested in the relation between material processes (typically the realm of the hard sciences) and culture, but I was not feeling like I could pursue this research from the narrow disciplinary tools that I had at the time."

Finding her passions in literature and culture, Raquel completed her masters and doctorate in Hispanic studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Before joining Middlebury in 2018, Raquel also held positions at the University of Washington and Florida State University.

At Middlebury, Raquel taught all levels of language, literature and culture courses in the Department of Luso-Hispanic Studies. Kevin Mata '22, a former student of Raquel's, described her as a selfless teacher who recognized the voice of every student.

"She was really intentional at making sure that her opinion didn't supersede our own," Kevin said. "Each of our opinions, regardless of our academic understanding of the topic, was just as valid as her own."

Kevin was in Raquel's Colonial Objects class in spring 2022. He remembered first connecting with Raquel during a ten-minute break during her first class. Spanish singer-songwriter Rosalía's album had just come out, and Raquel was talking about Reggaetón and how Rosalía's new music could be interpreted as appropriative.

"She made such advanced topics seem like the simplest things, in a way that was so heartwarming," Kevin said. "She made academics fun and relatable and important in the lives of queer and marginalized students."

Through the course of the semester, Kevin met with Raquel regularly to complete his independent project, which later won the 2022 Samuel Guarnaccia '30, MA '36 Senior Prize. Kevin said Raquel stood at the forefront of academic studies in Spanish literature. More importantly, Raquel was aware that academic writing is often driven by traditional modes of evaluation, and encouraged Kevin to question those standards of normalcy.

"She wanted me to know that these standards of evaluation shouldn't drive where I wanted to take this paper," Kevin said. "She told me that my own lived experience, just as well as her own experience, were enough to fuel the directions of the paper itself and bring about academic brilliance in its own way."

Raquel was a professor who inspired her students to reflect on how their own lives and identities can be shaped by academic literature. Kevin remembered the moment when Raquel shared with her class that she had been awarded a Ford Fellowship. To Kevin, Raquel was leading by example, showing her students that she was continuously pursuing her own studies, and if she could do it, then other students in the classroom who looked like her could do it too.

The compassion Raquel held for her students extended to her life outside the classroom. Associate Professor of Hispanic Visual Culture Enrique García said Raquel built an extended family with the community at Middlebury.

"She was like an aunt to everyone in the community, including the students and my kids. She would sometimes go to my kids' basketball games to support them," Enrique said. "She's Puerto Rican, like me, so she functioned like an auntie to my kids at Middlebury."

Raquel radiated with generosity and love for those around her.

Miguel recalled having an argument with Raquel while she was living in Philadelphia because she wanted to open her room to strangers as a transit house for youth traveling in the U.S. Enrique remembered Raquel's perseverance when taking care of her mother with Alzheimers, while continuing her commitment to being a positive influence on BIPOC faculty and students at Middlebury.

Raquel converted one of her grandmother's home cooked recipes into a poem that she included in a collection of poems. With her invitation, her grandmother became a co-publisher at 90 years old.

Raquel has left an imprint on Middlebury during her short four years here. According to Carlos Vélez-Blasini, dean of international programs and professor of psychology, Raquel was instrumental in the creation of the Middlebury School in Puerto Rico. She also helped design the website for the Luso-Hispanic studies department and decorate the department's new building.

"There are a lot of simple things that are great things," Miguel said. "And she did a lot of simple things."

LOCAL

Selectboard considers changing noise ordinance to ease town-gown tensions

By LILY JONES
News Editor

In a contentious Town of Middlebury Selectboard meeting in late August, wherein several town residents gave public comment about issues related to off-campus student housing, mostly regarding noise and parties, some residents argued that the definition of student housing as having "four or more people" in the April 2022 Amendments to the Zoning & Subdivision Regulations should apply to the entire structure rather than per unit.

The Selectboard decided not to change the language in the Amendments, but is now considering other options to address the issue.

"If it had applied to the entire structure then some of our students who lived in houses with separate apartments would have been impacted," said Sue Ritter, director of community relations, in an email to The Campus. This is because the town places some restrictions on districts where student housing is and is not allowed.

In response, Dean of Students Derek Doucet, who was in attendance at the meeting, set up a form on the Dean of Students website where town residents can report nuisances directly to the college so that administrators can communicate with students involved, and notified all residents who neighbor students of the form.

According to Selectboard Chair Brian Carpenter, the issue has been ameliorated in recent weeks; Carpenter said he has heard no complaints in the last month.

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HOW STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS GET THEIR FUNDING

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Local Editor

As student organizations submit budgets to be approved for the following year each spring, some fall short of receiving the full funding they request. Funding for clubs comes from the student activity fee that each student pays with their tuition. The Student Government Association Finance Committee (SGAFC) pointed to the growing number of student clubs as well as increased club spending as the cause of the funding shortage.

"Our essential role is to financially support student organizations on campus, and ensure that the funding that we're giving them really allows them to really pursue their mission and also create inclusive communities so that every student that attends Middlebury College is able to find a group that they identify with," said Gloria Escobedo '23, director of SGAFC.

According to the Student Activities Office (SAO), the number of student organizations on campus has increased recently.

"On average, the number of student organizations grows each year since the trend is that more new organizations are created than go inactive," a representative from the office said in an email to The Campus.

SAO noted that there are currently roughly 150 student clubs and organizations, with 20 more in the process of requesting official status. There are currently 148 listed student organizations on Presence, but the Student Life section of the college's website says that the Student Activities Team works with more than 200 student organizations.

Escobedo pointed to the growing number of student organizations as one possible cause for some clubs' funding not meeting their needs. Now that the college has relaxed Covid-19 restrictions, many clubs are returning to hosting in-person events, which has led to a need for more funding. She noted that organizations' costs were down during the last couple years because events took place virtually, and the cost of food and other materials was non-existent. Escobedo said that, generally, club funding has not decreased, but emphasized that it is difficult to generalize given that each club has a unique circumstance.

"All student organization funding is provided by the student activity fee paid by each student," the SAO said. However, organizations can also use their gift account, which contains any donations or money earned from sales that the club has accumulated over the years, and some organizations are endowed.

The amount of money SGAFC receives from the student activities

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Two alums from Wellington Management kick off Global Sustainability Speaker Series

By BRINLEA LA BARGE
Senior News Editor

Middlebury welcomed two alums, Sandhya Subramanian Douglas '93 and Soyibou Sylla '20, back to campus on Nov. 14 to give a talk on "Applying Sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Factors in the Capital Markets." This was the first installment of the Global Sustainability Alums Speaker Series co-sponsored by Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest, Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs, Climate Action Capacity Project and the Center for Careers and Internships (CCI). The series tracks sustainability across financial, entrepreneurial, political, activist and corporate sectors and offers Middlebury alums an opportunity to share their work with the college community.

Douglas graduated from Middlebury with a dual degree in economics and theater. She currently serves as the senior managing director, partner and director of strategic analysis and implementation at Wellington Management Company LLP (WMC), one of the first investment management firms to integrate climate science with asset management. WMC collaborates with Woodwell Climate Research Center (formerly Woods Hole Research Center), a think tank based in Falmouth, Mass., to analyze the effect of climate change on capital markets and imagine new opportunities for their clients.

Sylla joined WMC after graduating from the college with a degree in mathematics and chemistry. As an investment science associate, Sylla uses alternative data and statistical modeling to support investment decisions and works closely with the firm's ESG research team.

During the first segment of the lecture, co-moderators Amanda Frank '23.5 and Sam Sullivan '23 asked presenters to reflect on their experiences at Middlebury, professional track record and transition into the sustainability space.

Douglas said her journey began as an effort to connect equity and justice issues with climate change and to reimagine the role of sustainability in the corporate setting. She identified the three "levers" needed to effect change in global communities: science/technology (STEM), policy and capital markets.

"I work in an industry that does move a lot of capital around and we have the power to really influence structural change in communities," Douglas said. "We don't sit just in the capital market, we sit at the intersection of policy. Policy and capital markets go hand-in-hand. And so much of where we invest our clients' money is also driving technology changes."

WMC manages over $1 trillion in assets, including pension plans, endowments, college endowments and charitable foundations.

"That money gives us a lot of ability and power as stakeholders in these companies to create change," Douglas said. "So one of our primary ESG and sustainability principles at Wellington is to increase engagement over divestment. Divestment matters when engagement isn't possible, but engagement is a much more powerful way to create change."

Douglas said ESG integration is an intentional strategy to promote sustainability and climate justice, while continuing to uphold client interests and pursue investment opportunities in the market.

"ESG integration is not a political agenda on our behalf," Douglas said. "It's really about increasing values and ensuring better investment outcomes for our clients. Both the risks and the opportunities that exist in the transition from fossil to renewable economy — those risks, if we don't materially evaluate and incorporate them into how we're investing our clients' money, it's not going to create great outcomes."

In the next stage of questions, Douglas and Sylla discussed the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in fostering an inclusive environment at WMC.

"As a Black person who comes from a country that is still recovering from years of colonization and exploitation, I didn't think I had a space in finance," Sylla said. Sylla was born and raised in Senegal before moving to the United States for college.

"I've always questioned the usefulness of finance in the world," Sylla said. "I still can't say I don't question it anymore, but I definitely have a lot more perspective and a much more nuanced view."

According to Douglas, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are integral to WMC's mission as an investment management firm and to expanding opportunity pipelines for prospective employees in the field.

"If you're constantly looking for those opportunities through the same lenses, you're going to run out of opportunities," Douglas explained. "So you need to expand the set of perspectives that come together to help identify new ways to help our clients achieve their outcomes."

The third stage of the lecture focused on sustainable development and investment strategies for tackling the "eight-headed crisis" — climate change, public health, water and stable food supply, biodiversity loss, social and racial injustice, trust in institutions and international trade, geopolitical tensions, and technology — before moving to questions from the audience.

"One thing for all of us to remember is that these kinds of beings, structural societal changes — they're not a straight line up to the right. It's a journey," Douglas said. "But it's really important to take a step back and look at the big arc... the arc of history bends towards justice."

How student organizations get their funding

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fee has remained relatively consistent throughout the years, according to Escobedo, with slight increases as the activity fee has gone up. On average, SGAFC receives about $1 million each year to allot to student organizations, she said.

The student activity fee for the 2022–23 academic year is $460. The activity fee is approved by the Board of Trustees as part of the comprehensive fee that also includes tuition and room and board, and it has been steadily increasing in recent years. The fee for the 2021–22 academic year was $440, for the 2020–21 academic year it was $436 and for the 2019–20 academic year it was $426. Escobedo noted that the college increases the fee in part to account for inflation.

Based on the estimated number of students on campus, accounting for those abroad, the combined total of the student activities fee for this academic year is approximately $1.1 million. In 2020, all non-remote students paid the student activities fee, and The Campus reported that the amount totaled $1.2 million.

In addition to funding student organizations, the student activity fee also covers other SGA initiatives, such as break buses and the Presence website and other operational costs. During the spring of 2020 when students were sent home, SGAFC pivoted its reserve funds to financially support students and staff.

Each club presents a budget to the SGAFC in order to determine how much money they will receive, according to Cole Siefer '25, deputy director of SGAFC. The treasurer and president of each club explain each item on their budget to the committee, after which the committee evaluates the presented budget and finalizes it.

"We also depend on historical knowledge for a particular organization. So organizations that have been long standing... [if] we've noticed a trend that they have been growing in size, sometimes that might lead us to allocate them with a larger amount, as opposed to prior years," Escobedo said.

Student organizations also have the ability to obtain funding from sources other than the SGA Finance Committee, such as alumni donations and profit from services or products sold, according to Siefer. However, Siefer noted that obtaining funding from other sources is not common for clubs, and SGAFC has no control over how clubs spend their money earned from other sources.

According to Siefer, if a club has spent all of its allotted budget or has an unexpected expense, they can complete a new money request. According to the Student Organization Handbook, the deadline for new money requests for the fall 2022 semester is November 18. Siefer said that the process for new money requests is the same as the annual budget requests.

"I think historically, there has never, at least in my knowledge, been an instance where we've completely run out of money and haven't been able to provide financial assistance for club organizations," Escobedo said. She explained that many clubs do not use the entirety of the money they are allotted. At the end of the academic year, any funds remaining in club budgets are added to the SGA reserves, a fund set aside for emergency use.

Clubs present their budgets in the spring for the following academic year. This means that clubs may not know their exact funding needs at the time they make their request.

"We rely pretty heavily on this funding as it makes our social events more accessible since members don't have to pay out of pocket," said Melisa Gurkan '23.5, treasurer of the Middlebury Mischords, an a cappella group.

Club sports budgets are also covered by the student activity fee, but the oversight of club sport funding recently transitioned from the domain of SGAFC to that of SAO. SGAFC now allocates funding for all student clubs and organizations except club sports.

"Club sport budgets were getting very, very large, and we were starting to lack some of the knowledge and expertise necessary to be able to to handle the budgets," Siefer said. The change in oversight coincides with the introduction of the club sport tier system that defines the budget, competition and resources of each club.

Escobedo encourages clubs who feel that they do not have enough funding or that some of the items they requested in their budget proposal were denied to make new money requests when needed. "We're more than happy to continue those conversations so that we can get a better understanding of what funding is needed and where it needs to go," Escobedo said.

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University of Vermont announces tuition freeze for fifth consecutive academic year

By AMANDA MANOOGIAN
Staff Writer

The University of Vermont's Board of Trustees voted on Oct. 27 to freeze current tuition rates for the fifth consecutive academic year. The trustees also approved freezing room and board fees for the fourth year in a row. According to Financial Services at UVM, the current annual tuition for undergraduates is $16,280 for in-state students and $41,280 for out-of-state students.

The tuition freeze initiative began in 2019 when UVM President Suresh Garimella advocated freezing tuition to keep the university accessible and affordable, benefitting in-state UVM students, as well as the two-thirds of its student body coming from out of state. The tuition freezes have allowed the classes of 2023 and 2024 to pay the same price for tuition since the year they arrived. In the decade prior to 2019, tuition increased at a rate of approximately 3% per year.

"Many families are struggling with inflation in today's economy... It is more important than ever that we do all we can to help students and families afford a high-quality UVM education, and to keep our university accessible, affordable, and competitive," Garimella said in a press release last month. Before Garimella became the university's president, UVM had not frozen tuition fees in over 40 years.

In addition to freezing tuition, Garimella recently announced the UVM Promise: a program which guarantees full-tuition scholarships to dependent students from households in Vermont with yearly incomes up to $60,000. Beginning in fall 2023, the UVM Promise will cover four years of tuition for eligible incoming first-year students.

In its press release, UVM wrote "[Because of tuition freezes], the cumulative total savings for all students enrolled at UVM over the five academic years ending next year will exceed $163 million."

Ashleigh Clark, a member of the UVM class of 2025 and UVM SGA senator, wrote in an email to The Campus that the tuition freezes are what ultimately made her decide to attend the university. "[The] tuition freeze alongside receiving a scholarship, the strain of attending college was lessened... [for] myself and my family," Clark wrote.

Clark said she has seen the impacts of the tuition freezes firsthand, noting the record number of applicants to the university. The UVM Promise has encouraged more Vermont students to apply to UVM.

"The demand came from the drive to attract more in-state students, most students come from out of state, and other states even outnumber Vermonters," Clark said. "While freezing tuition benefits all students, it's a part of many initiatives trying to bring in more in-state students."

In an email to The Campus, David Provost, Middlebury's executive vice president for finance and administration, shared that, unlike private institutions in Vermont such as Middlebury, "state schools like UVM are eligible for state of Vermont support." This past year, Vermont Governor Phil Scott approved an additional $10 million for UVM's budget, making their annual appropriations $52.5 million in total. According to the university, approximately half of this budget is allocated to supporting students' financial needs.

Provost also explained some of the potential downsides to a tuition freeze. "[This approach] sometimes results in bigger tuition increases down the road... if your costs are increasing for student support, programming, faculty and staff salaries or inflationary factors on such things as energy, food costs, and other operating costs, you need a funding mechanism to cover those increases." While UVM receives a large sum of money from the state, this appropriation only accounts for around 7% of its fall 2023 operating budget of $776 million.

"Alternatives to increasing the price for attendance are increasing fundraising efforts and building your endowment, increasing the number of students or cutting existing costs by layoffs," Provost wrote.

Middlebury does not currently have plans to freeze tuition.

"Affordability is a primary focus for Middlebury as well. Middlebury meets 100 percent of demonstrated financial need for all admitted students and provides grant aid to about half of the student body. For the Class of 2026, the average grant was $60,600," Nicole Curvin, dean of Middlebury College Admissions wrote in an email to The Campus.

UVM said in June 2022 that the university currently offers full scholarships to 45% of its undergraduate students. While Middlebury does not offer as many full scholarships as UVM, the average grant offered by Middlebury is significantly higher, largely because the cost to attend is higher.

"Middlebury also partners with the Posse Foundation and Questbridge, a nonprofit that helps high-achieving, low-income high school seniors gain admission and a full four-year financial aid package to some of the nation's most competitive colleges," Curvin wrote. The Posse Foundation and Questbridge each partner with no more than 100 colleges, many of which are private. Currently, UVM is not partnered with either organization.

Selectboard considers changing noise ordinance to ease town-gown tensions

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Carpenter added that the issue of parties and noise complaints has been prevalent this year because of some new student residences in neighborhoods not used to having student neighbors. "We had a couple of high-visible residences that were transformed into student dwellings, and the transition didn't go well," Carpenter said.

"Some people were asking for some pretty severe change," he said, referring to the proposed change to zoning. "But we decided to take a gradual change, a little more education, getting college leaders involved to be a liaison to those residences, and we are going through the process of changing the [noise ordinance] hours."

Carpenter said he opposes the changes to zoning, as they would undermine the town's efforts to increase housing density to address the affordable housing crisis facing Addison County.

"I do not believe that a town-wide zoning ordinance that is designed to reduce the number of students living off campus would be an effective tool for addressing excessive noise and other problems associated with parties," Ritter said. "We feel that the best way to address noise issues is for the town to continue to take all necessary measures to enforce the noise and public nuisance ordinances with those who are in violation."

The Selectboard is considering changing the noise ordinance to make quiet hours begin at 11 p.m. instead of 1 a.m. Yelling and playing an electronic sound producing device within these hours both currently constitute a violation. The current fine for breaking the noise ordinance is up to $1,000 per offense. In comparison, the City of Burlington quiet hours start at 10 p.m.

In order for the change to go into effect, the Selectboard must allow public comment on the ordinance. "At this point the Board has supported it, and it will go on to the public hearing phase," Carpenter said.

The Selectboard is also working with college administrators to assess the potential impact of changing the ordinance. "We will make sure we aren't upending any traditions or if that is the case, creating a process where there is an exemption approval format," Carpenter added.

"Some of our College events end after 11 p.m. and we are hoping to find a solution that would allow those events to continue," Ritter said.

Charlie Burdett '22.5, who lives off-campus, doesn't mind the proposed change. "We always want to respect the town's quiet hours, so I'm fine with Middlebury residents asking for a change in quiet hours if it means there isn't new restricting zoning of student housing," Burdett said.

Elaine Zhang '23.5 struggled to find her off-campus house for this school year. "Middlebury does not provide a wide range of options for students... Zoning might also make housing unaffordable because of the limited choices," Zhang said. "However, I still think that 11 p.m. might be a bit too harsh for students."

Carpenter said he is optimistic that the Selectboard can address the issue without involving zoning. "We have much greater issues: housing, childcare, economic development. We're not looking to spend a lot of time on this. We could debate this ad nauseam. I've lived in this town a long time and it crops up, we address it, and it settles back down," he said.

Ritter suggested that students remain conscious of their place in the broader community.

"Students should make it a point to get to know their neighbors and build a relationship with them," Ritter said. "They should also understand that when living in town they are part of a larger community and therefore they should be mindful of how their actions impact those around them."

Breaking (coffee) grounds: new Vermont cafés to add to your list

By Olivia Mueller
Arts & Culture Editor

It has been an exciting year for coffee in Vermont, with several new cafés and bakeries popping up locally.

While established cafés are beloved by their communities, there are plenty of newer spots in Vermont that could make an exciting shake-up to your daily routine or offer a weekend adventure. Here is a list of cafés and bakeries within about an hour's drive of Middlebury that have opened in the past two years and are worth a trip.

Little Seed Coffee Roasters – Middlebury, Vt.

Kicking off the list is the closest option to Middlebury's campus. Little Seed opened in September 2021, making it the newest coffee shop in town. Abundant seating options, including extensive table space in the secret-feeling lower level, and its proximity to campus make this a go-to study spot. Owners Anthony and Maggie Gerakos roast their coffee in-house, which lends cozy vibes and aromas to the space. With bags of beans, a full espresso menu and some pastry options, Little Seed is a space where Middlebury students can often be found sitting and lingering over their drink while getting ahead on an essay or cranking through a reading.

24 Merchant's Row, Middlebury, Vt. 05753. Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday – Sunday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Olivia Mueller/The Middlebury Campus
Minifactory sells coffee, pastries, and local produce in Bristol, Vt.

Vermont Minifactory – Bristol, Vt.

Minifactory opened its doors this spring on Main Street in Bristol, Vt., replacing Bristol Cliffs Café. Its hours of operation and menus remain variable. Some days customers will find a full spread of breakfast and lunch options, other days oysters and cocktails in the evening or, still others, grab-and-go food. Minifactory sources as locally as possible, with produce from nearby farms, preserves from herbs grown at head cook V Smiley's own farm and coffee from Burlington roaster Brio Coffeeworks. Regardless of the menu selection and staffing levels, you can depend upon a robust selection of pastries, espresso, preserves and some local produce for sale. The café also has several table sizes to choose from — a large table on the left side of the café is ideal for work or for a small group meeting, and there are plenty of cheerful yellow chairs to go around. Minifactory also hosts dinners, community events and other non-coffee pop-up occasions worth keeping an eye out for.

16 Main Street, Bristol, Vt. 05443. Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Friday – Saturday 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Jones the Boy Bake Shop – Bristol, Vt.

Originally founded in 2016 as a home baking operation, Jones the Boy Bake Shop opened a physical location last August, replacing Almost Home Market, just off of Bristol's main drag. The bakery is only open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, but despite the somewhat limited hours, a visit is absolutely worth a little extra planning. With just a couple seats, this intimate shop feels like the definition of a hidden gem. It is the perfect spot to grab a to-go bite, but it's also worth sitting outside on a sunny day to enjoy a freshly-baked muffin or scone. Customers will find a dazzling array of pastries and breakfast options on display in the bakery case, all at reasonable prices. Jones the Boy also serves Uncommon Coffee, an Essex Junction-based roaster, to wash down your sweet treat with whatever espresso beverage you choose.

28 North Street, Bristol, Vt. 05443. Thursday – Friday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Boxcar Bakery – Essex Junction, Vt.

Boxcar is a fresh — and, dare I say, out of the box — addition to the Vermont coffee and café scene, having just opened this past October in the Five Corners development of Essex Junction. With a mellow green color scheme, Boxcar has a serene and welcoming atmosphere. Owned by sisters-in-law with previous experience in the Vermont restaurant industry and a passion for baking, Boxcar aims to provide a gathering space for the community and a wide range of delicious baked goods. From scones to cookies to cakes, and both gluten free and vegan options, there's something for everyone here, and plenty of tables at which to relax or do work.

11 Park Street Suite 101, Essex Junction, Vt. 05452. Thursday – Monday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Rosie's Market and Cafe – Winooski, Vt.

Stepping into Rosie's for the first time, you would be justified in thinking you suddenly walked out of Winooski and into a Paris patisserie — the Eiffel Tower mural on the wall only adds to the effect. With a black-and-white striped awning and a bubblegum pink storefront, Rosie's stands out from the street. Rosie's is a family-owned operation; one side consists of a bakery and espresso bar, while the other half is home to Rosie's Confections, which features an array of chocolates, including some with CBD. The coffee offerings are robust, including a full espresso bar, tea latte specials and seasonal latte offerings such as pumpkin spice. Rosie's is an appropriate spot for an intimate meetup, with limited but comfortable seating at a couple of small tables by the front windows. A back room behind the ordering counters is better suited for working.

7 West Canal Street, Winooski, Vt. 05404. Sunday – Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Addison County votes against school district merger

By OLIVIA PINTAIR
Staff Writer

COURTESY OF HERB OLSON
A Stop the Merger lawn sign posted in Ferrisburgh.

As millions of Americans cast their midterm ballots across the country on Tuesday, Nov. 8, residents of the nine Vermont towns that compose the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD) and the Addison Northwest School District (ANWSD) decisively rejected a proposal to merge districts in a 4,282 to 1,886 vote.

In response to low student enrollments, the idea to merge was initially proposed in December of 2020 by MAUSD Superintendent Patrick Reen alongside a bid to repurpose three elementary schools. Uniting the two school districts through the merger was offered as a way to consolidate resources, centralize administration and cut costs as enrollment dwindles and inflation strains school budgets. According to members of a Merger Study Committee, which formed in May 2021, a merger could have saved 5 million dollars annually by eliminating roughly 42 positions, including 11 central office positions.

"While still a difficult budgetary consideration, this merger [would limit] the number of positions that will need to be reduced compared to each individual district's projections," reads the Merger Study Committee Report & Articles of Agreement.

"The problem of declining enrollment is most evident at our high school where approximately 76% of our high school classes are below the class size minimums set in policy, and 27% have enrollments in the single digits," Sheila Soule, superintendent of ANWSD wrote in an email to The Campus. "It is very difficult to maintain the current slate of course offerings with such low numbers. A merger would have provided an opportunity to more flexibly staff or develop programs in the region without eliminating course offerings."

In MAUSD, low enrollments present a similar problem.

"We have seen a decline in our enrollment at the secondary level over the past several years and are expecting an even steeper decline at the secondary level in the coming several years," Reen wrote in an email to The Campus, "We are projecting F[iscal] Y[ear] [20]24 to have approximately 160 fewer students than FY18."

Although a decline of 160 students might not seem significant, Reen noted that each student within MAUSD represents approximately $20,000 in the district's ability to spend state-allocated funds without increasing the tax rate. In these terms, a loss of 160 students by 2024 would mean the district could spend roughly $3 million less on education in 2024 than it did in 2018, necessitating cuts to staff and programs that benefit students.

After Reen's proposal in December, immediate pushback from town residents who opposed a merger led the MAUSD and ANWSD school boards to open the conversation, soliciting proposals from community members on alternative ways to address enrollment and financing issues and hiring consultant Nate Levenson and his firm, New Solutions K-12, to evaluate them. In January of 2021, Levenson issued a report on his findings, which explored possible solutions, some of which involved a district merger and some of which did not.

In May of 2021, after considering Levenson's report, the school boards voted to assemble a Merger Study Committee. After months of research, Marikate Kelley, co-chair of the Merger Study Committee alongside Martha DeGraaf, says a majority of the group felt that a merger was the best option to address low enrollment and financing. After a committee-wide vote where only one member dissented, they officially proposed the merger.

But on voting day in Bristol, Monkton, New Haven and Starksboro, the towns that MAUSD serves, 62% of voters favored remaining an independent district. Similarly, in Addison, Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes and Waltham, which comprise ANWSD, 72% of voters opposed the merger.

Neily A. Jennings, the parent of two students at Robinson Elementary School, is a member of Starksboro Save Our Schools (SSOS), a bipartisan group of Starksboro residents that has been organizing for this election result since June of 2021.

"We all share the beliefs that small, local schools are highly valuable to students and the surrounding community, that we deserve a right to vote on the future of our schools, and that we can work together to generate creative solutions that both center students and ensure financial sustainability," Jennings wrote in an email to The Campus.

"Our [group's] initial efforts were focused on an attempt to withdraw Starksboro from the consolidated Mt. Abraham Unified School District," wrote Susan Klaiber, another member of SSOS.

During a voice vote on May 10, 2022, Starksboro residents unanimously voted to leave MAUSD. But when one town in the district later failed to approve Starksboro's motion to leave, SSOS changed course, focusing on trying to stop the merger entirely, circulating information, writing op-eds and posting lawn signs to spread the word.

Herb Olson, who helped galvanize SSOS alongside Nancy Cornell, felt uneasy about the merger due to its potential effect on voting protocols.

"Right after the Merger Study Committee started its work, we became very concerned that they would use that process to take away what we have right now, which is the right to vote before an elementary school is closed," Olsen said.

Under the Articles of Agreement that would have governed a unified district, schools could have been closed with the vote of a two-thirds supermajority of the district, a policy that would have differed from the current process regarding school closure whereby only a school's town votes on whether or not to close their school, rather than the entire district. For many voters, giving up a town's full agency to decide on a school closure represented too big of a risk.

"Many, if not most, of the votes opposed to the merger were opposed to a school being closed without the vote of the town in which the school is located," Klaiber wrote.

While the State of Vermont mails ballots to all registered voters in Vermont for federal and state elections, those voting by mail this election didn't see the merger question on their ballots.

According to an op-ed by two residents of Monkton, if voters wanted to vote on the merger, they had to request a ballot from their Town Clerk or vote in-person on election day. Critics of the merger noted that this posed a barrier to accessibility for those who wanted to vote on the issue.

"The folks over in Montpelier in the agencies and the state board and even the legislature really kind of decided that they knew better than parents and communities what's best for their students," Olson said. "And this whole merger election had the full force of state authority and power on its side. What I think is remarkable is the extent to which, in terms of the vote margin, that view was repudiated by folks who were closer to what the situation is at the community level."

In the wake of the vote last Tuesday, many are feeling relieved.

"[Now] I know that Robinson School can't be closed without a vote of our town, and that helps me feel that Starksboro is a stable place for me to raise kids," Jennings said.

For Chanda Rochon, another member of SSOS, local schools represent something irreplaceable.

"My grandmother went to Robinson, my mother, myself and now my daughter is also attending the school. The school is where our community's heart is. It is our centerpiece for socialization, growth, education, friendships and trust," Rochon said.

Others view the decision as a loss of a vital opportunity to benefit students in the long run.

"We still have the same problems, you know, it's not going away," Kelley said. " Our schools are doing pretty good right now, but this work was really to address what's going to happen in the next year or two. You see that in so many issues, like climate change, right? When things are going fine it's hard to think about change."

As school boards begin to develop their budgets for the coming year, board members will need to consider creative solutions to respond to financial pressure. According to SSOS organizers, they would be wise to take community input seriously while doing so.

"Our job will be to manage the program reductions the best we can to minimize the impact on students," Reen said. "But in the end what we offer students four or five years from now is almost certainly going to be less than what we offer now."

COURTESY OF CHANDA ROCHON
Over 200 Starksboro residents gathered at Robinson Elementary School for a town meeting.

COURTESY OF SUSAN KLAIBER
A car shows off a "Stop the Merger" bumper sticker.

Porter Medical Center hires new Primary Care providers to meet community needs

By ASA STONE
Contributing Writer

ABIGAIL CHANG/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The sign outside Porter Medical Center in Middlebury, Vt.

Porter Medical Center announced nine recent hires in the Primary Care sector of the hospital this past August, in an effort to better meet community health needs.

Based on the Addison County Community Needs Assessment and Porter's Community Health Improvement Plan, it was determined that there needed to be a shift from a crisis-based approach to a preventive care approach. This shift includes new providers and new technology.

Porter Primary Care physician Dr. Natasha Withers wrote in a press release on the hospital's website that "keeping people healthy takes a diversified team of people working together to ensure our community has access to the right care."

This new team includes mental health professional and psychologist Mark Frayne and primary care physician Melanie Connah. Porter's new hires indicate a shift toward both increased attention on mental health, as requested by residents, and fuller coverage in the primary care department.

> ...it was determined that there needed to be a shift from a crisis-based approach to a preventive care approach.

The changes also include an option for patients to meet with a dietician, as well as self-management and education classes for those with issues such as diabetes or hypertension.

These changes are being made in Middlebury, along with the Porter branches in Vergennes and Brandon, Vt. Many of the new hires will also travel between the branches in order to improve access throughout Addison County.

In an effort to reach patients who may not be able to leave their homes, the Medical Center has also created a telehealth option, which is similar to that offered to students by Middlebury College through TimelyCare.

The implementation of telehealth, the virtual chart service MyChart for scheduling purposes and more convenient access to health records and the hiring of a nurse to support all three locations virtually are all steps towards innovation and increased use of technology in Porter's medicinal care, according to the press release.

Abbey Gate

Op-ed

Sajia Yaquoby *is a member of the class of 2025.5*

August 17, 2021. A hot day, after a long night of sleeplessness. I'm in a crowd of hundreds of people. My father leaves my sisters and me at the first checkpoint: Abbey Gate in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Freedom's door, I thought, but I had no idea what that meant nor what it would look like, covered like me in a black veil, a black scarf and a black mask.

A few days before, I went shopping with a friend at one of our old bookstores on the streets of Kartai-Char and visited Rumi's dedicated art shop, which would soon be shut down by the Taliban. I ended up buying a long, beautiful black dress. Later that week, I wore it at a birthday party in a restaurant built in one of the old houses of Kabul. My family and I sat outside and the evening, like many other summer evenings in Kabul, seemed promising. The moon, so bright and so distant, warned of the long and dark nights to come.

On that roasting summer day, though, with the sounds of gunshots and cries of thirsty babies ringing out, I only thought of my black veil. That same beautiful black dress I bought a few days ago. Before that day, I had worn it by choice for its style and beauty. Today, it was a symbol of repression and vulnerability. On the second day of the Taliban's dominance over the country, as the second sex, I had to cover my entire body and avoid eye contact with Talib men. The militant group, ignorant of basic human rights, perceive women as a shame and dishonor, needing to be controlled by male family members. By the third day of Taliban control, I was able to flee the country, but millions of other women were not as privileged as I was.

Afghanistan, for as long as I can remember, has been "the worst country to be a woman," according to the Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace and Security. It is never easy to live in a society where the culture and religion are all turned against women. My body was always the object of discussion and judgment; there was no escape from the male gaze. Every single man on the streets had the power to control and question my clothing. Still, I was privileged. I was able to attend school and dream of a better future, yet millions of other Afghan girls could not. For more than a year, the school doors have been closed to girls who are silently fighting for their basic human rights to education, free movement and work.

I come from a distant village in Badakhshan, a province in the north of Afghanistan. With a group of cousins, I grew up hiking in its green mountains and climbing in its apple trees. Swimming in its small, flooded river during the spring season was my favorite. That group of cousins is now separated today. Some of us were lucky enough to end up in foreign countries like the U.S., but one of us lost his life on the front lines fighting the Taliban, and the rest are in Afghanistan. My female cousins are at home, excluded from school — silent and forgotten. For years I was questioning the concept of war and why my people, my own uncles and my cousin were a part of the misery. Now I know it is simple: The privilege I had since childhood, that freedom, was what they were fighting for. Today, life is dark and silent for so many.

Today marks 425 days since the Taliban takeover, and girls are still unable to attend school in Afghanistan. It is a catastrophe that should never have reached these numbers. The Taliban have dehumanized women and taken their basic rights from them. While I am being challenged every day with a new task and can grow from my failures and successes by attending college in the U.S., girls in Afghanistan still have no choice but to stay home. Under an oppressive regime, their creativity and potential for growth have been eliminated.

The reality of this tragedy is what I carry with me everyday. I might not notice it in my daily life, but, deep down, it's there when I want to grieve and find meaning. Some days I encounter it as a vision, a perspective on how I perceive and see the world. I find grounding in this vision, a home and centering focus that compels me to do better.

Many might ask, "So what does it mean to do better given all the privileges you have now?" It could mean so many things: understanding the notion of conflict and gender aparthied and why the women of my country have always been a target of both extremist and liberal agendas. It also means working hard for me and millions of other girls who would never experience what it meant to be hopeful and empowered.

CLUBS NEED SUPPORT THAT REFLECTS THEIR IMPORTANCE

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

"Your individual thoughts and ideas are fostered here, and the opportunities to express them are endless. Students are also able to start new clubs each year, so the possibilities for engagement are virtually limitless." In reading this messaging from Middlebury's admissions web page, one would expect the extracurricular experience to be inviting and seamless. Unfortunately, the image presented to prospective students does not hold true to our experience as active members of the Middlebury community.

Our activity fee has gone up every year, but we are not seeing these resources reflected in current extracurricular infrastructure. Based on current enrollment, we can estimate there is well over one million dollars in total allowance for club resources this fiscal year. It is clear that sufficient resources exist but are potentially not being adequately or efficiently allotted.

In contrast with the college's stated goal of "limitless" opportunities for club engagement, it seems as if bureaucratic systems have often become a hindrance rather than a help. A lack of transparency surrounding club funding, which is often inadequate, can make it difficult for student leaders to secure sufficient resources for their organization.

While some clubs finish their semester with excess resources to spend, others struggle to finance basic needs like cycling race dues, away game travel or printing costs. In many cases, this means that members have to pay out of pocket for such costs, which can prove a consequential barrier to club participation. Full engagement in a club should not be contingent on one's socioeconomic status.

The amount of funding a club receives in a given semester is determined by the Student Government Association Finance Committee (SGAFC). When the committee hears a request for funding, they go through the proposed budget line by line and accept, reject or partially accept each item. However, many club leaders have shared that the reasons behind rejections and partial acceptances are poorly explained. Leaders often find themselves reapplying for funding throughout a semester in order to fully fund their organization's needs, which can be a stressful and inflexible process.

In particular, the new tiered system, which determined the number of competitions allowed for each club sport, has proven confusing and constraining for many students looking to engage in athletics at the non-varsity level. The designation of some clubs seem arbitrary; for example, all current club teams with varsity counterparts, no matter their record or number of members, are categorized in "Tier 3." For club sports such as tennis or soccer, which attract a significant number of students for whom that sport is often a defining part of their identity and Midd experience, it is illogical to constrain their level of participation based on the false premise that students have the opportunity to play on the equivalent varsity team instead.

In addition, performing arts-based clubs such as a cappella and dance groups have expressed frustration regarding a lack of reliable rehearsal spaces. As a result, such groups often find themselves scrambling at the last minute to find suitable accommodations. The downstairs Proctor basement space — a well-loved dance studio and location for Midd Yoga classes — has been indefinitely closed to students. It's hard to imagine athletic facilities being closed to varsity teams; this demonstrates how other clubs are provided different access and prioritization.

With the importance of club engagement in mind, encouraging broad and meaningful access needs to be our institutional priority. In order to best facilitate improvements, increasing transparency around club funding amounts, and elucidating the process of awarding such resources, is our first hope. Simply publishing each club's annual resources in an open forum would be a productive step that would allow student leaders to compare their funds with those of similar organizations. It would provide them the opportunity to advocate for the resources their club needs, instead of relying solely on word of mouth or limited records from past treasurers or presidents.

Secondly, it is critical to recognize that the SAO staff are overburdened and under-supported due to the fact that there has been significant turnover and understaffing as of late. Since the departure of the director of student activities last winter and the departure of the director of club sports and outdoor programs this fall, remaining staff have taken on new jobs. A larger and more consistent staff body in SAO, as well as improved communication between SAO and student leaders, would be a tremendous asset to the health of Middlebury clubs and organizations. Their hard work does not go unappreciated, and we call for increased SAO staffing in order to take pressure off existing staff members.

Especially considering our relative isolation here in rural Vermont, it is critical that the college prioritizes well-organized and well-funded opportunities for engagement. Unlike students who attend urban institutions, our cultural and community-based experiences are largely restricted to what we have here on campus. This has the potential to bring us closer together, to foster strong cohesion and inclusion, but we must better utilize our resources in service of the richest possible student experience.

Reflections on the Midterm Election in Vermont

Op-ed

Wright Frost *is a member of the class of 2024*

I first learned of John Klar on Facebook. He bought his first wave of ads in the late spring. They were professional, yet rustic: photos of him working on his farm or interacting with constituents, promising in several captions to "bring together people from different political views," and to "bring a critical eye to Montpelier" in another. The State Senate district I live in, encompassing most of rural Orange County, Vt., was the one in which Klar was campaigning, and my first thought was that he seemed made in the image of Phil Scott, Vermont's prominent Republican governor. My home state has a history of electing moderate conservatives with staggering margins of victory, but in recent years, few other than Scott have been able to put together the pieces of the puzzle on election day. Klar's ads, heralding his common sense and emphasis on fiscal responsibility, were like those I saw for Scott every election cycle, so I assumed he was trying to replicate the governor's success.

Like most Vermonters, I'm a Democrat. And although I don't despise moderate Republicans like Phil Scott, having come of age in the Trump era, the thought of the GOP as a whole leaves a bad taste in my mouth. The Democrat who has represented Orange County for my whole life, Mark MacDonald, hasn't had a tough reelection campaign in the last two decades, and Vermonters hate rocking the boat. MacDonald has long been well-liked and handily reelected, so early in the summer, I had no worries about his campaign.

But I started to see more and more of Klar's advertisements as the election cycle progressed. Houses that had Trump signs proudly displayed Klar signs as well, but so did houses of people I knew usually voted for MacDonald. I also started to see more of Klar on Facebook. The captions of his posts that I saw in my feed were changing: "protect children from scandalous ideological conditioning in schools," and a fundraising ad about giving Mark MacDonald a "retirement blanket." (This was an attempt to poke fun at rising heat prices.) It was becoming clearer to me that Klar was a hardline conservative, not a moderate. The comments on his posts were alarming as well: people voicing their fear of undocumented immigrants, their beliefs in conspiracies about the 2020 election and stating that Burlington is becoming a hub for drugs and sex trafficking. Klar responded positively to many of these comments, expressing sympathy with their viewpoints.

As his campaign's momentum grew, he became bolder, referring to a local school superintendent as "Herr" and blaming him for supporting "content-filtering totalitarianism." Klar also called a 14-year-old transgender high school student "a student with a penis leering at [people's] daughters while changing." Becoming more and more combative by the day, he mirrored the statements of election deniers running for Senate and statewide office across the country. Panicked, my friends and I tried to spread the word about Klar's radicalism to our neighbors. For the first time in my life, I felt I was in the midst of a highly competitive campaign — one with significant ramifications.

In the end, MacDonald won by about 10%. I felt a little silly for having worried so much, especially as there were greater stakes in elections in places like Pennsylvania and Georgia. But time provided me with more clarity, and the message I'm taking from this election is that extreme views like Klar's, even if not necessarily potent enough to win, can still garner immense support and enthusiasm. Vermont is a state that responds surprisingly well to radical populism — the Take Back Vermont movement in the early 2000s is one recent example — so perhaps it is unsurprising that candidates like Klar gained traction in other parts of the state.

Even in places like Orange County and Middlebury that appear to be oases of calm and stability, the hate and vitriol on which Klar founded his campaign are still prevalent. Although I wish this wasn't a lesson I needed to learn, the election reminded me that the civility and level-headed government we enjoy in Vermont is not something we should take for granted. Keeping this state supportive of local industries, welcoming to newcomers and safe for marginalized groups is no small task, and is something that all who live here, and all who attend Middlebury, should fight for.

Editor's Note: The opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the individual and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Middlebury Campus or Middlebury College.

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The Middlebury Campus

It's time to reimagine and reintroduce first-year orientation trips

Op-ed

***Jessica Buxbaum, Calin Laine** & **Anne Lofgren** are members of the class of 2023, and **David Goldsmith** is a member of the class of 2023.5*

NADIA HARE/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

First-year orientation in September and February plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of incoming students and the culture of our campus community. It is the first opportunity students have to get to know the new people and places that will surround them for the next four years. For every first year, it is a time filled with uncertainty and anxiety over finding community, feeling included and accepted, and figuring out whether Middlebury will be a place where they can feel safe, feel loved, challenge themselves, grow and find joy.

We believe that overnight orientation trips are vital for building connections between first-year students and providing new students with the resources and support they need to feel comfortable in the beautiful landscapes and communities of Vermont. Three years after the last orientation trips at Middlebury, it's time to reimagine and reintroduce first-year orientation trips.

Prior to fall 2020, every incoming first year student who matriculated in September spent their first four days on campus engaged in academic orientation programming before departing for a three-day, two-night orientation trip. Febs had the option to go on a two-day trip or do day trips due to winter weather. In the last pre-pandemic iteration of fall MiddView, the activities offered on these trips ranged from photography to meditation, backpacking, food systems tours, trail maintenance and many others. They provided a chance for students to spend a few days of uninterrupted (and largely phone-free) quality time with a small group of their peers, getting to know one another over shared interests and new experiences.

Due to the pandemic, staff responsible for overseeing MiddView were forced to adapt the program starting in fall 2020 to prioritize the health and safety of students and community members. Instead of leading trips, MiddView leaders met with their groups for a few hours each day on campus — or over Zoom when necessary — to play icebreakers, go over the academic orientation schedule and provide a space to relax and ask questions. While unavoidable, it is hard to imagine that the quality of connections and experiences in this structure matched those made on orientation trips of the past. This structure remained in place this fall — albeit with less masking and Zoom meetings than in the previous two years — and leaders were responsible for even more programing and support throughout the week than in the past.

Now, with the fallout from the pandemic largely in the past, the college is at a crossroads in deciding how they want to welcome new students going forward. We believe it is extremely important for orientation trips to be reimagined, redesigned and, ultimately, reintroduced as a fundamental part of the first-year orientation experience.

The benefits of outdoor orientation trips cannot be overstated. According to Dr. Brent Bell, an outdoor programs researcher at the University of New Hampshire, undergraduate outdoor orientation trips have been shown to increase feelings of belonging, resilience, community well-being, student retention rates and even alumni giving rates (if that's what you're into). They are a high impact program, on par with first-year seminars and undergraduate research opportunities when it comes to improving the new-student experience. One study conducted at West Virginia University found that participation in an outdoor orientation program significantly increased student retention rates, and that this impact was greatest for students from disadvantaged backgrounds — such as those with a lower expected family contribution towards their education.

That is not all to say that designing outdoor orientation programs that are welcoming, accessible and joyful for all students is easy. Pre-Covid orientation trips were aptly criticized for being inaccessible and uncomfortable for students who didn't grow up with the privilege to access the outdoors and recreate comfortably in remote, rural settings. Being in a small group and participating in new, and sometimes challenging, activities can also put uncomfortable spotlights on people's varying cultures and backgrounds, physical abilities, degree of extraversion, and dietary habits.

> If outdoor programs have been inaccessible in the past, the solution is not to get rid of the outdoors; the solution is to equip the program with the necessary resources and proper leadership to make students feel safe and cared for in the outdoors.

However, the challenges of designing a successful and comfortable program should not stop us from trying. We are advocating for outdoor trips not in spite of the fact that they have historically been inaccessible, but because we see thoughtfully designed trips as an amazing tool for making the outdoors and Vermont's communities truly more accessible and welcoming to new students. If outdoor programs have been inaccessible in the past, the solution is not to get rid of the outdoors; the solution is to equip the program with the necessary resources and proper leadership to make students feel safe and cared for in the outdoors.

What will it take to reinstate this program to the benefit of all incoming students? First and foremost, it will take the willingness and courage to try. First-year students in the past three years have had their orientation experiences stunted by Covid-19, but this doesn't mean that we should accept this as the status quo. Current seniors and senior Febs are the last remaining classes to have experienced orientation trips. This presents a unique opportunity to redesign trips with the fresh eyes of younger students and provide a wider variety of difficulty levels and types of trips than ever before. We must get creative, keeping what worked and addressing the program's shortcomings to design a program that meets the needs and wants of all incoming students.

Fair compensation for orientation leaders will be another crucial step in ensuring that orientation trips are accessible, fun and valuable. Consistently paying orientation leaders an amount that reflects the amount of work they do will make it clear to the entire college community that this program is valued, and it will ensure that the best student leaders on campus are welcoming new students — not just the students who can afford to come to campus early and forgo paid work elsewhere.

Compensation will diversify and strengthen the program's leadership but only under certain conditions. Compensation must be large enough to make orientation leadership an appealing and competitive job for all students. It must be advertised clearly during the application process to attract a wider pool of applicants. And it must be awarded in a timely manner. None of these three conditions have been met consistently over the past three years. Leaders from fall and winter 2021 were paid nothing at all; leaders in 2020 and 2022 were awarded a $300 stipend (months after the program ended in both years) — an amount that worked out to less than $4 per hour at most; and no leader in the last three years has known explicitly whether they would receive compensation prior to applying for or accepting the position of orientation leader.

Administratively, it is also necessary for a student board to be heavily involved in the process of reimagining and redesigning orientation trips. The fact that students have continued to sign up to be orientation leaders despite all of the program's disruptions in the last three years signals that there is energy among students to thoughtfully and enthusiastically welcome first years. Administration and student activities staff members should be harnessing all of this energy and care toward the development of the next generation of orientation programs.

This process of reinstating and thinking critically about outdoor orientation programs is happening at many colleges and universities like Middlebury. Williams College's post-Covid orientation programs include a "base camp" option in which students can opt to sleep on campus but remain heavily engaged in outdoor activities with their orientation group during the day. Dartmouth College has brought back their outdoor orientation programs in full swing. Tufts University offers affinity trips as a pre-orientation option for students of color, women, queer students and other students of marginalized identities.

Outdoor orientation trips at Middlebury will be successful so long as they have resources behind them and a dedicated community of students, staff, faculty and administrators willing to think boldly and creatively about the future of the program. These programs have the potential to radically improve the first year experience, creating the communities and establishing the lasting relationships that are fundamental to the success of incoming students.

If you are interested in sharing your experience as an orientation participant or leader, or would like to express your opinion about reimplementing orientation trips, please fill out our poll at go/OutdoorOrientation or go/OO.

THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE: A REVIEW OF THE INN ON THE GREEN

Op-ed

***Marc Chu** is a member of the class of 2024*

COURTESY OF MARC CHU

Infamous for keeping way more than one panther apart from the campus, the Inn on the Green incites anguish and sorrow in those assigned to it during the housing draws. However, the proverbial wisdom of the Inn being the worst "dorm" at the college is several worlds apart from reality. The three months I have spent here have, in fact, been an absolute blast, and I will be in tears by the move-out date.

Moving-in

I learned about my assignment to the Inn days before the start of the fall semester. After completely missing the housing registration and getting one of the last spots for the August draw, I figured my luck had run out.

I arrived at the Inn at midnight. Heartbroken by the end of the summer, worn down by my flight with four transfers, and despairing at the knowledge that classes started the very next day, I opened the door to my room for the very first time. There, I was like a deer caught in the headlights: astonished.

The Room

Rooms at the Inn are improvements by leaps and bounds compared to their Ross counterparts. It makes sense; this is, after all, built to be a hotel. Accordingly, each student is privy to their own bathroom and enjoys the comfort of a cross breeze, since each room is situated in the corner of the building. In the morning, as light pours in from the windows, I found myself being woken up far more times from the sun's rays than the deafening clamor of my alarm — which is a welcoming change. Due to the notoriety of the building, many residents live alone in doubles, which I, too, enjoy. After a bit of rearranging, I turned the two bunks into a king-sized bed and cleared out a substantial area to hang out with friends.

As if I was not lucky enough already, my room is also one of two spaces with access to the rooftop. Surrounded by wind swept amber-colored maple leaves and boasting an unencumbered view of all things from Otter Creek to Old Chapel, it is the coolest place to watch the sunset over the town of Middlebury.

Location

Now addressing the elephant in the room: the location. No doubt, the Inn is the furthest dorm from campus, but it is closer than most people think. In around 15 minutes, you can get to most academic buildings and dining halls. The distance is far from preposterous, but it does make the moments in between classes awkward. In the meantime, I have made a few pacts with Middlebury's bus drivers: the Hannaford line agreed to add a secret stop near the main rotary, while the Bristol bus lets me get off at the Merchant's Row; both locations are minutes away from the Inn. Regarding the laundry situation, the school has more than made up for our lack of washing machines with a free year-long subscription to Wash-and-Carry. Seriously, it is going to be hard to go back to doing laundry by myself.

Many people equate themselves living at the Inn to Napoleon being shipped off to Saint Helena: banishment from the Middlebury community. This is an outright misconception; the Inn on the Green has one of the most central locations in town. It is really convenient to walk to restaurants, farmer's markets, the theater and, of course, bar night. Whilst the walks back from weekend evenings are never pretty, they are, at least, partially offset by the unusually temperate weather this fall. Having made trying out every beer on the planet my lifelong ambition, I am also overjoyed to live next to four gas stations and Shaw's. In the past three months, not only have I sampled every beer on offer, but I was also introduced to all kinds of gossip by the Middlebury residents. A lady working at the gas station, for instance, told me everything from an attempted robbery by high schoolers to the wild adventures of her middle school friend. In this sense, the Inn's distance from campus did not separate me from the Middlebury community. Rather, it gave me much welcomed personal space to explore my hobbies and connect with the Middlebury residents.

Verdict

The Inn on the Green is a new student residence that somehow carries the same level of opprobrium as the college's oldest hall, Battell. Of course, there are stretches where the distance from campus make day-to-day activities more difficult, but support from the college and access to town sweeten the deal just enough to make the tradeoffs seem fair. Sure, the Inn will never replace Atwater as a social juggernaut or challenge the Adirondack house for its locational dominance, but those afternoons that I spent with friends on the roof, watching the sun descend towards Pearson's fire escape have got to count for something. They make the Inn worth it.

Castalian Quartet Returns to Middlebury for the first time since 2019

By RYAN McELROY
News Editor

Many eager admirers of classical music braved the inclement weather and made the journey to Robison Hall on Friday, Nov. 11, when the Castalian Quartet returned to Middlebury for the first time since 2019. Named for the Ancient Greek spring that bestowed poetic inspiration upon those who drank its waters, the quartet compelled its audience to leave their soaked raincoats and dripping umbrellas at the door and dive headfirst into the mythic currents of its stunning music.

Director of the Middlebury Performing Arts Series Allison Coyne Carroll introduced the group by describing the relationship between Middlebury and the Castalian Quartet. The story began when she witnessed the group's breathtaking and riveting performance at the 2016 Banff Quartet Competition, a showing that ultimately won Third Prize. Her experience at that concert led to the inclusion of Middlebury on the group's debut U.S. tour in 2019.

"I was thrilled to secure Middlebury that performance, and we were wedged in between Washington D.C.'s Phillips Collection and New York's Lincoln Center," Carroll said. "I'm glad I am able this fall to please the many patrons who came up to me after that concert and asked me when I would re-engage [the Castalian Quartet] again."

Throughout their two-hour performance, the group of four masterful musicians unfolded themes of jealousy, introspection and joy throughout three pieces: Leoš Janáček's String Quartet No. 1 (Kreutzer Sonata), Jean Sibelius' String Quartet in D minor, Op. 56 (Voces intimae) and Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130, with Grosse Fuge, Op. 133.

The first quartet, Leoš Janáček's String Quartet No. 1, was inspired by Tolstoy's dark novella, "The Kreutzer Sonata." "Pitting violent motifs against more heartfelt lyricism, Janáček creates a series of confrontations, as if between husband, represented by the former, and wife, described by the latter," a note from the program read.

The impassioned performance captured emotional frenzy and cathartic struggle as each musician urgently raced one another through the melody to pull the audience deeper into the emotional conflict. It was as if the Castalian Quartet and its captive listeners were rushing toward the edge of a cliff, unsure of what lay ahead but unable to stop even in the face of danger. Hearing the sharp, dramatic exchanges between instruments in contrast to the slow, startling moments of quiet felt like witnessing the death throes of a once-bright love. The final movement was the quiet resolution of internal turmoil punctuated by one last cry that quietly faded into harmoniously stunned silence.

The second piece, Sibelius' String Quartet in D minor, Op. 56 (Voces intimae), held a special significance for the Castalian Quartet's leader, violinist Sini Simonen. She described how the composer's use of folk music in search of the Finnish identity was deeply personal for her, as someone born in Finland who has left her home to live and perform abroad.

"When you grow up in Finland, Sibelius is just something that is incredibly central to us... It's all around. It's the kind of harmonic language that just feels like home," Simonen told the audience. "This piece has all the strength, love and eccentricity that one could ever wish for."

The piece was inspired by the thoughtful reflections of Sibelius on Finland and his national identity. It uses traditional scales and Germanic folk music that the quartet poignantly illuminated. The piece's musical brilliance came from how its resounding, melodious flow felt like a celebration of something both eccentric and nostalgic. It was like a conversation between old friends who know each other's past but struggle to understand their present. The complex emotions conjured by this piece may be similar to anyone away from their home like Simonen or students who spend months or even years away at college. This was a piece for those who wonder how they can feel like a stranger in a place they once knew so well.

Courtesy Photo

The skill of each performer shined through the piece's five movements as the challenging composition demanded their individual excellence merge together in astonishingly swift pace. The musician's nimble fingers and soaring bows danced across strings and weaved through the full range of their instruments. The fiery and piercing finale raced forward with incomprehensible speed and urgency towards the triumphant, powerful end that left no doubt of the Castalian Quartet's capabilities.

"[Sibelius] had a rowing accident when he was very young and had to stop having any professional dreams. Sometimes I think he almost made his revenge in this piece to ensure that violinists ever after would suffer," Simonen joked. "It's a wonderful piece, but it's really hard."

The final quartet was Beethoven's String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130, with Grosse Fuge, Op. 133, which ended the night on the group's most complex and lengthy piece. The early movements shift from intensely fast to delicately slow, from the D-flat key to the distant and unexpected G-flat. The piece's cyclical tension is expertly conveyed through the Castalian Quartet's mastery of each moment of their performance. The musicians understood how to shift between such contradictions without losing the audience, and in doing so delivered them to the grand finale of the night.

The final movement of this piece, Grosse Fuge (Op. 133), was originally replaced by a lighter conclusion because it was seen as incomprehensible and unplayable. The program notes that "the fugue is a mighty struggle stretching mind and sinews to the limit," but the Castalian Quartet successfully conquered Beethoven's majestic and joyful finale in the cathartic culmination of their performance.

As the audience emerged from Robison Hall, gathering their umbrellas and coats to return home, the soft falling of rain returned them to reality. The cascading showers felt as though the Castalian Spring had opened in the town of Middlebury that night and poured out its brilliant, musical waters for all those who had made the journey.

CONVERSATIONS WITH ATHLETES IN THE ARTS

By SOPHIA AFSAR-KESHMIRI
Opinions Editor

At a small liberal arts college like Middlebury, one would think that a strong overlap between the arts and athletics would be both inherent and central to the campus community. However, whether it be based on the fact that students only have so much time or whether there is a cultural divide between the athletes and the arts, students can have a tendency to pick one or the other. The Campus spoke with some varsity athletes who are also majoring in the arts to ask them how they do it and what they think of this supposed cultural split.

"There definitely is [a gap]... it's evident in the access to alumni who played a sport and majored in some sort of art field. There are not many," Jordan Saint-Louis '24 said.

Saint-Louis is a player on the men's varsity soccer team and is a Film and Media Studies major. He said he did not know many other current student-athletes who are also majoring in the arts. Saint-Louis isn't bothered by this discrepancy, though.

"I think it's fun because there are so few of us. I often get to use my artistic ability to create things for my team or other sports teams, which I always enjoy," Saint-Louis said.

While he hasn't found many other athletes in his specific major, he says it hasn't been difficult to find peers who share interests in both the arts and athletics.

"I actually think there is an abundance of athletes interested in some version of art... they just don't major in it," Saint-Louis said.

Varsity basketball player Liv Mulloy '23 also experiences a divide between the arts and athletics at Middlebury. "I have felt this gap for a long time, long before Middlebury. When I first started playing basketball, I felt like I had to hide my artistic interests. It is difficult to pinpoint where and why this gap exists. However, I think on many teams, if you are an athlete, being an artist as well is not celebrated. I think it lies on the back of athlete culture and stereotypes created around artists," she said.

Mulloy is not an arts major, but studio art is central to her life. "I was... very hesitant to take a Studio Art class for a long time," she said. "However, [it was] not because I was an athlete. I was hesitant... because art is a creative outlet for me, and I feared that being in these classes would encourage me to view my art in a binary manner of right or wrong."

Her experience as an athlete in the arts has drastically changed since grade school. "For me today, it is amazing... because I am lucky enough to be on a team in which we celebrate each other's passions and skills unrelated to basketball... though it has not always been amazing, as for many years I hid a part of myself in fear I would be devalued," Mulloy said.

Like Saint-Louis, she has had an easy time finding peers who share both interests. "Luckily, one of my closest friends who is on the volleyball team also shares an interest for art... I have many friends who have an interest in the arts and athletics, though they may not be on a varsity team," she said.

For Mulloy, making art is not only a creative outlet but also a way to connect with her family. "My mom was an artist and so was her dad, so I drew a lot as a young kid. Art now makes me feel closer to my mom and served as a form of therapy for me after she passed away," she explained.

Thea Volpp

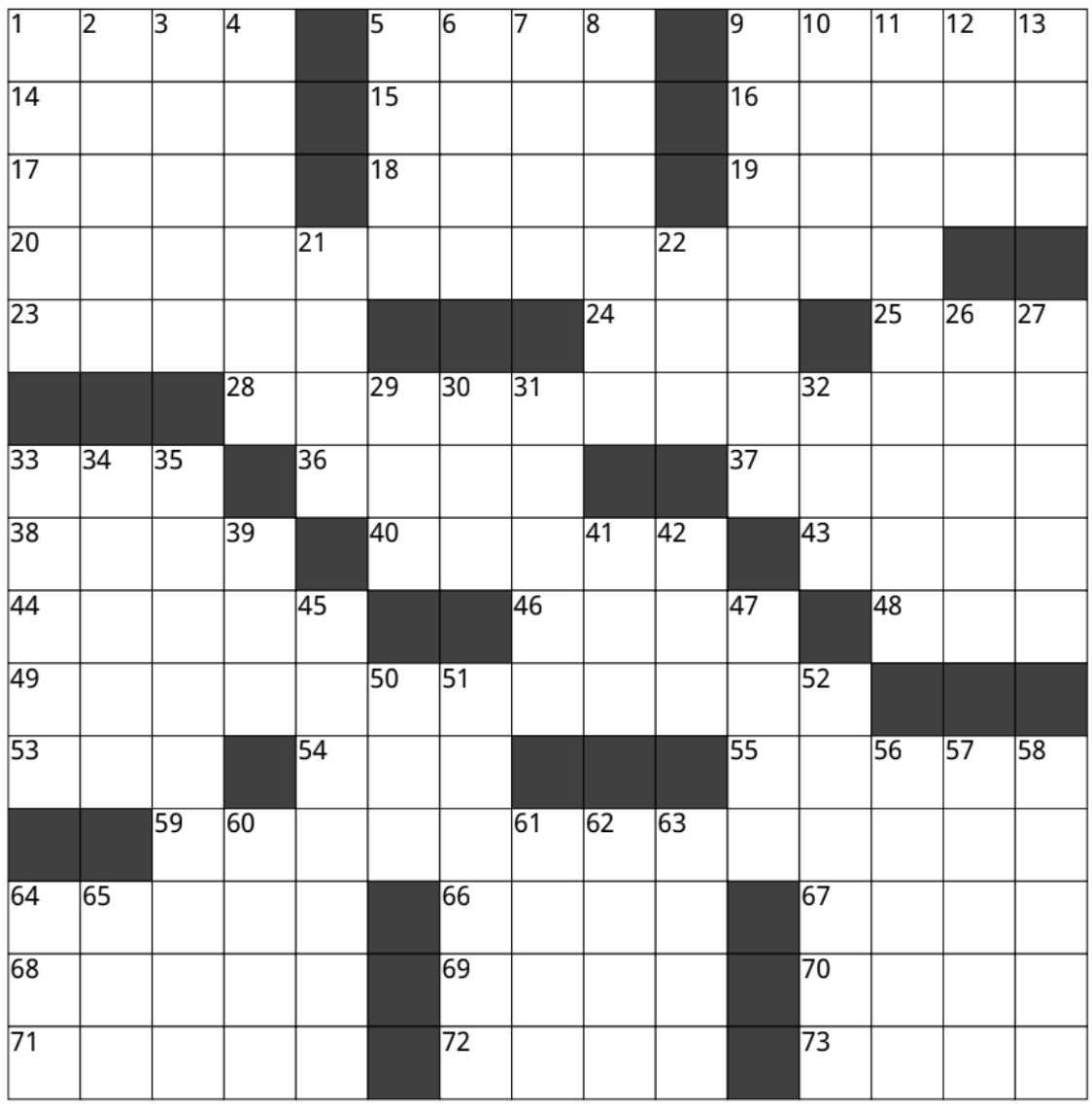
Mulloy's teammate, varsity basketball player Gianna Palli '24, who is majoring in both economics and history of art and architecture, has a different perspective on the divide between the arts and athletics at Middlebury. "I wouldn't necessarily say there is a gap between the arts and sports but I don't think it is particularly common for students to partake in both," she said.

However, Palli had a similar experience to fellow athletes in the arts in other ways. She too has had an easy time finding others with overlapping interests. "While my non-art major friends may not have a "technical" background in arts, everyone has opinions or experiences in art in some capacity."

Although it may seem like students choose one or the other, the line between athlete and artist on campus is blurred, and often nonexistent. Perhaps the apparent gap is more reflective of the collective desire to put people in boxes, to name someone an "athlete" or an "artist," than it is an indicator of the way things are. Middlebury is a campus full of interesting and multifaceted people — something that becomes apparent if we only talk to them.

THANKSGIVING-THEMED CROSSWORD

By JOSH HARKINS
Contributing Writer



Across

1 Boat home
5 Maori ceremonial dance
9 Car company started by brothers Horace and John
14 Insurance company for the U.S. military community
15 Gold medalists Raisman and Wagner
16 Mode of communication for Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan
17 Disciplinarian, with school
18 Clark's belle
19 Longtime food of the Israelites
20 Nationalistic Scandinavian of yore*
23 Shaggy's pal
24 Bro's spouse, abbr.
25 Former Portuguese colony in India
28 Big cats in Michigan*
33 Conflict that saw the first use of 36-Across, abbr.
36 Sherman or Pershing, in WWII
37 School in Carcassonne
38 Subject in which one learns about 33-Across, abbr.
40 A breakup, for a friend group
43 Start of famous New York -Bagel shop
44 Cuba and Canaries, for example
46 Stomach growl, with hunger
48 D.C. summer time
49 Upcoming holiday when many watch football games with players from the starred clues
53 German article
54 A molecule with an electric charge
55 Where compromisers seek to reach across
59 Wranglers in Texas*
64 Focus (on)
66 Tampa baseball team
67 Parliament immediately following the Long Parliament
68 What 'many' and 'water' don't do gramatically
69 Funny initialism
70 Strong ___ ox
71 Beginning
72 Identifying numbers in the U.S.
73 When repeated, a greeting from Mork

Down

1 Lifts weights
2 Asimov or Newton
3 Keep an ___ the ground
4 Straight as an arrow
5 What identifies Francis as a Saint
6 Bunches
7 European capital home to the Mariinskyi Palace
8 St. Francis' home town
9 Film director Cecil B.
10 Country with capital at Muscat
11 Frustration directed at a waterfowl?
12 Alcohol in a Bees Knees
13 School subj. with much reading and literary analysis
21 "Suuuuure"
22 Sports uniform
26 Taking a trip
27 Something taken when class starts
29 A small amount
30 Vacation, for a G.I.
31 African mammal known as a "forest giraffe"
32 Done to a kicker by taking a timeout before a field goal attempt
33 Add cream to make this Russian distinct
34 Words before could
35 NHL team that plays in UBS Arena
39 Co-star of Netflix's Queer Eye reboot France
41 Cuban employee, for short
42 What to give someone leading a chant about 35-Down
45 Frying pan
47 Eat away (at)
50 Martian day
51 Half of the duo behind 4x Platinum single "Crazy"
52 Author and poet of "The Prophet" Khalil
56 "Semper Fidelis" composer
57 Matt Santos' campaign manager and chief of staff Josh
58 Where to watch many NCAA games
60 Sheltered from wind
61 Worthington and Cooke, for two
62 Printer color
63 Bears in Bogotá
64 Guiding force, according to Lao Tsu
65 T.V. station originally from Chicago

NICHE READS: NOVEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK

By SYLVIE SHURE
Opinions Editor

If you struggle to find time for fun reading, this is the spot for you. Niche Reads recommends novels that relate to academic (or other) interests so you can explore a new book while still feeling productive. Check back each week for more cool books.

As Thanksgiving rolls around, a lot of people have family on their minds. Spending time with family can be wonderful, but also stressful, so look below for some novels that explore family relationships.

"Tell Me How To Be" by Neel Patel:

"Tell Me How To Be" follows Akash and his complicated relationship with his family, particularly his mother Renu. Akash, a gay musician, is the black sheep in his family, struggling to find his footing in Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Renu, coping with the death of her husband, rekindles a relationship with her first romantic flame.

This story has some heavier themes, but it is ultimately an intimate and beautiful exploration of complex family dynamics. Patel's writing style is clean and fast-paced, and his characters are rich and nuanced. The dynamic between Akash and Renu is often difficult to read, but it is the emotional centerpiece of this novel.

You should read this book if you are interested in the intersection between sexual and racial identity, if you find stories about art compelling or if you are looking for a shorter read.

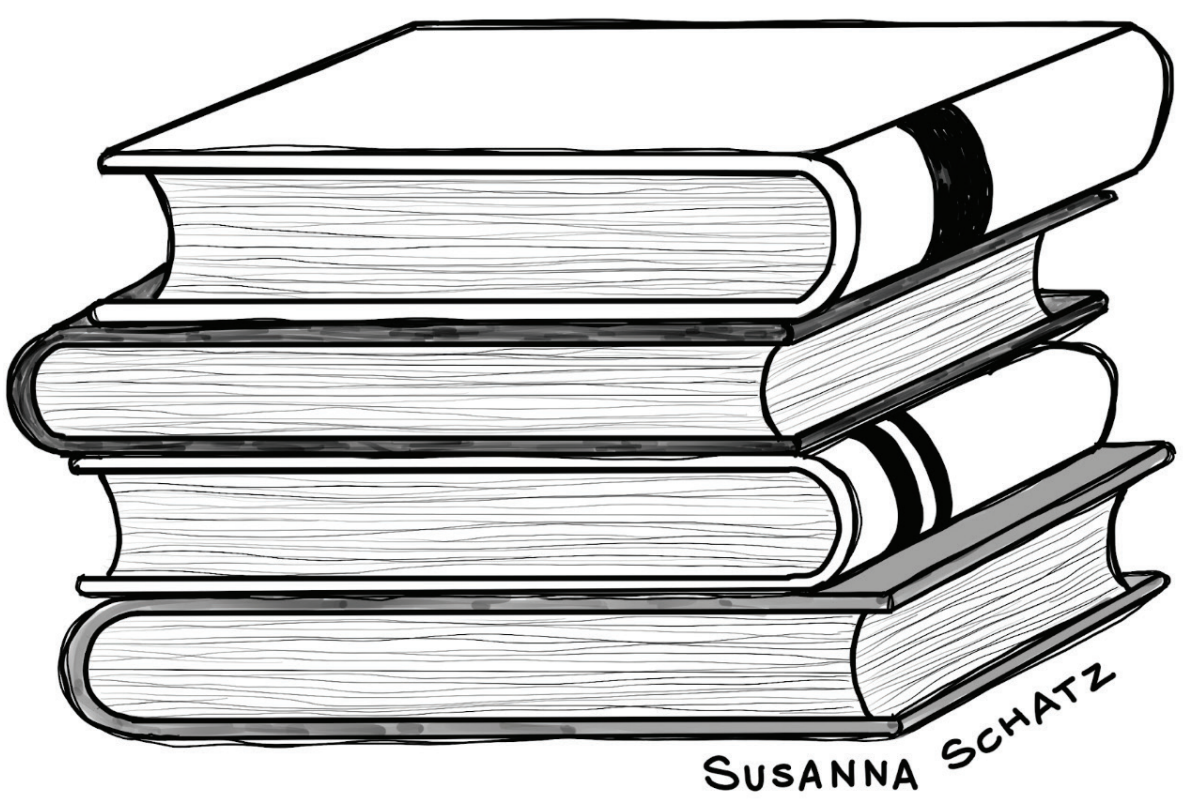
"And the Mountains Echoed" by Khaled Hosseini:

This novel follows many threads, but its central pillar is the relationship between Abdullah and Pari, two siblings forced apart when their father finds a way to secure a more comfortable life for Pari. To fully explore the connections between them, the novel takes an expansive approach and examines their many bonds, particularly those stemming from familial relations.

Set mainly in Afghanistan, "And the Mountains Echoed" also visits Paris, Greece and the U.S. It is based around the importance of family connection and how it can connect people in ways they don't realize.

"And the Mountains Echoed" is a heart-wrenching story of loss and love. Although it is heavy at times, its overarching theme is one of hope.

You should read this book if you like stories that span generations, if you are interested in familial bonds or if you like tearjerkers.



"A Man Called Ove" by Fredrik Backman:

Ove is a grumpy old man who lives alone in Sweden, spending his days pushing his neighbors away. When a young family moves in next door, however, he finds his solitude challenged and revisits his life story.

"A Man Called Ove" is a story of found family. It emphasizes not just blood relation, but the communities people choose to surround themselves with. It is a heartwarming novel that focuses on looking beyond superficial impressions.

This touching, emotional book is a beautiful and fast read. It's a perfect book for the Thanksgiving season, and will remind you to be grateful for the people you love.

You should read this book if you like bittersweet stories, if you like the found family trope or if you're looking for a novel with a positive message.

Middlebury College Orchestra fills Robison Hall for a night of Mozart and more

By JACK TORPEY
Arts & Culture Editor

The Middlebury College Orchestra held its fall concert on the evening of Saturday, Nov. 12 at the Olin C. Robison Concert Hall in the Mahaney Arts Center. Over the course of two hours the group of nearly 70 student musicians and visiting professionals played to a packed hall of Middlebury students, parents and community members. Leading the orchestra was conductor Evan Bennett, a Juilliard-trained musician who also directs the Northeastern University Symphony Orchestra.

The concert's program consisted of three seminal compositions spanning from the Classical period to the golden age of Hollywood, specifically Mozart's 1791 overture to "Die Zauberflöte" ("The Magic Flute"), César Franck's 1889 "Symphony in D Minor" and Bernard Herrmann's 1958 suite for Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo." A performance of such ambitious music demands significant time and dedication to prepare for, a challenge that cellist Will Procter '24 insists the orchestra was willing to undertake.

"We rehearse twice a week, Thursday and Sunday, for two hours from 7–9 p.m. So four hours a week, it's basically more than a class," Procter said.

Flutist Emily Le '26 echoed Procter's assertion of the orchestra members' commitment, going further to mention the additional hours of practice outside of rehearsal it takes to do justice to musical icons as monumental as Mozart.

"That [full-group practice] doesn't include all the hours we practiced on our own outside of rehearsal, which, for me at least, was a lot," Le said. "We definitely couldn't have gotten to where we were if we didn't put in the extra work ourselves."

Anyone within earshot of Robison Hall on Saturday night would likely say that this extra work paid off. The orchestra opened the concert with a beautiful rendition of Herrmann's "Vertigo" Suite, a score whose shrilling strings and swelling horns encapsulate in sound the hypnotic images of the Hitchcock classic. A predominantly unnerving aural experience suddenly becomes tragically romantic in the closing "Scene D'Amour," and it was this passage of "Vertigo" that cellist S.G. Solomon '25 enjoyed playing most.

"I felt like the music was a lot easier... for the cello at least, but there were still a couple parts in there where the things I was playing, it just kind of reminded me, like, this is why I chose this instrument, this is why I play," Solomon said.

Procter was more attuned to the Classical period, declaring Mozart's overture to "The Magic Flute" as his highlight of the night.

"It's kind of your classic happy, fast, not as difficult piece... When you think of classical music, it's kind of that stereotypical loud, fast, fun overture," Procter explained, adding that "it really just got things exciting."

The lively overture was the second musical offering of the night and a strong showpiece for the talents of the various sections in the orchestra, none more so than for the strings. As Bennett drove them on, the violinists raced their bows ceaselessly across their instruments to keep pace with the rapid runs strewn across their sheet music. It appeared to be a mentally and physically taxing performance, but it certainly was not in vain: the second of silence that followed the end of the piece was quickly overcome by a passionate applause from the audience.

Courtesy Photo

Aiden Snorek-Yates '22.5 (front middle) takes the stage with his cello.

After a 10-minute intermission, the orchestra returned to the stage and ended the night with a performance of Franck's "Symphony in D Minor." The group played the piece admirably, but this last selection lacked the emotional resonance of the music that preceded it. It may be because it was a bit long at roughly 45 minutes, or it may be that Franck's composition sounded slightly dull coming after Herrmann's cinematic suite and Mozart's rousing overture, but the diminished energy of the final piece ultimately did not seem to matter to the audience when the concert finally drew to a close. As the last note sounded and the musicians rose to bow, the audience erupted into an enthusiastic ovation that lasted nearly two minutes. It was a fitting conclusion to a wonderful night of music, and for those who made it possible, it was another reminder of why they first joined the Middlebury College Orchestra.

"At the concerts, just knowing that I'm playing there, looking out at a full house, having this massive sound around me all coming together in this really articulate, nuanced way that all blends together, and just putting on a great show for everybody," Procter said about why he loves the orchestral experience.

For others like Le, playing in the orchestra was the perfect way to meet new friends who shared her passion for music.

"My favorite part is definitely the friends I made, Lizzy Sherman '26 (a fellow flutist) and Isabella Aroesty '26 (cellist). They are some of the kindest people I've ever met... we are going to continue hanging out together even though practices are over," Le said.

And then there's orchestra members like Hans Kindstedt '24, a French hornist whose observation of why he plays may very well cut to the essence of what it means to be a member of the Middlebury College Orchestra.

"It's fun to sound good," Kindstedt said.

Reflecting on Saturday night's concert with this statement in mind, it's safe to say he had a blast.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: A VISIT FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON

By EDYTH MOLDOW
Staff Writer

In July 1845, American transcendentalist poet, essayist and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson walked the same Old Chapel halls that Middlebury students and administration do today.

Emerson's commencement address to the class of 1845 is a true treasure of the Middlebury College Special Collections. "Emerson at Middlebury College" was published in 1999 by Friends of the Library, a literary society founded in 1987. The book contains a preface written by Robert Buckeye, librarian and curator of the Abernathy Collection at Middlebury from 1973 to 2003, essays written by Sylvia Robison and John McWilliams, and Emerson's own words.

Through her essays, Sylvia Robison, member of the Middlebury Town Democratic Committee and Middlebury Congressional Church since 1975, revealed background information that contextualized 19th century Middlebury College.

In 1845, students of Middlebury College were largely conservative and religiously devout. These characteristics were a manifestation of religious controversy from the Second Great Awakening and the national financial crisis of 1837. Supported by Vermont's Congregational clergy, many Middlebury presidents, faculty and trustees were Congregational ministers.

Between faculty turnover, financial problems and enrollment decline, the college was in crisis. What's more, competition for state resources and differing religious perspectives between the University of Vermont and Middlebury College engendered a rivalry between the two institutions.

"The Institution struggled against neglect and poverty... carefully balancing between hope and fear," said Benjamin Labaree, then-president.

According to Robison, "dissatisfaction with the classical academic curriculum led to the formation of student literary societies." One of these societies was the Philomathesian Society, which Middlebury Special Collections has records of from 1803 to 1855. The Society met every week to debate "political, religious, social and educational issues." In 1844, Middlebury senior Silas Randall wrote to Emerson on behalf of the Society inviting him to speak.

In McWilliam's analysis of Emerson's speech, he comments on Emerson's opening "Likening Middlebury to Attic Greece," where "the life of the mind, as symbolized in the Athenian wheat vine and olive, [is] everywhere and of all time." The mind, in Emerson's eyes, is infinite in its ability to imagine, to observe and to expand.

Middlebury students today can still learn from Emerson's speech, which gives advice to the scholar through three primary assertions.

The first is that separation where there should be unity limits the infinite potential of the scholar's mind. Emerson said, "I find a provision in the Constitution of the world for the class of Scholars, for the Theorist, the uniter, for him who is to show identity and connexion where men see nothing but fragments, & to supply the axis on which the frame of things turns." In McWilliam's words, "Emerson assumed that many of his contemporaries see their world as a multiverse of separable fragments that justify and necessitate increasing specialization within all professions." His challenge to the Middlebury scholar, then, is to find unity (in the way that liberal arts praises interdisciplinary study) where there seems to be separation between subjects. The "axis" turning is the scholar's ability to be flexible and entertain many passions at once. Further, McWilliams writes that "Empiricism and Idealism, imagination and measurement, Emerson well knew, would have to work together in the Scholar's search for truth."

Emerson's second piece of advice for the Middlebury scholar is to search for universal truth, but to know it is never completely attainable; the point of education lies not in the acquisition of that truth, but rather in the constant flux of learning. In McWilliams' words, "Emerson always insisted...that no mind had arrived at any final Truth, and the student taught to think so was being crippled." As Emerson said, "In our experience, learning is not learned, nor is genius wise." The scholar, in his eyes, is "unfurnished who has only literary weapons. He ought to have as many talents as he can."

Finally, the transcendentalist calls the scholar to reflect on their life through a series of six questions: "Who are you? What do you do? Can you obtain what you wish? Is there method in your consciousness? Can you see tendency in your life? Can you help any soul?" Though Emerson himself was pious, we are not asked these questions by some deity or pedagogy, but by the society in which we live.

Addison County's weekly newspapers offered feedback on Emerson's speech. The Northern Galaxy commented that, "the manner and style of Mr. Emerson is highly cultivated and polished. His address was of highly transcendental character." As the Vermont Observer noted, "[The speech] was highly literary and exhibited a mind of no common order." The Middlebury Reporter, predecessor of The Campus, mused that "such an ordinary looking man could be transformed when he began to speak, and just as Emerson was transformed by his words, so was his audience."

Middlebury students felt as if they were intruding on a private conversation between Emerson and himself. "His audience was not listening to something directly addressed to their minds; instead, they overheard someone who appeared to be conducting a conversation with himself," a scholar reflected. Robison writes, "Nearly all agreed that there was magic in the delivery."

Ralph Waldo Emerson declined the request of the Philomathesian Society to publish his 1845 "Commencement Address" at Middlebury College. As stated by Buckeye, "The Friends' publication of the Emerson address 155 years after it was delivered is a significant Bicentennial bookmark."

As Middlebury students, the lessons we glean from Emerson's speech may help us continue to grow as scholars, members of the community and self-reflective individuals.

CLIFF-HANGER: SKIDA AND OUTDOOR GEAR EXCHANGE PRESENT "THE APPROACH 2" AND "NEXUS"

By MAGGIE BRYAN
Arts & Culture Editor

In Maggie Bryan's column "Cliff-Hanger," she reviews outdoor films and explores the power of adventure as a catalyst to conversations over modern issues.

On the night of Saturday, Nov. 12, skiers, snowboarders and film buffs gathered in Burlington, Vt. for the sold-out screenings of two new ski films: "The Approach 2" and "Nexus." The event was sponsored by Skida, an accessory brand founded by Middlebury alumna Corinne Prevot '13, and was hosted at Outdoor Gear Exchange, an outdoor store on Burlington's Church Street. Both films highlighted the stories of historically marginalized groups in the outdoor industry, who have risen above stereotypes and barriers to pursue what they love. Each story told in "The Approach 2" and "Nexus" emphasized a fierce sense of joy in spite of hardship. Despite confronting heavy topics, the screening left audience members feeling jubilant.

"The Approach 2," directed and produced by University of Vermont graduate Anne Cleary, is the sequel to "The Approach" (2021), which follows a group of people of color, adaptive athletes and women skiers and riders as they push societal limits and uplift their communities. "The Approach 2" opens with a compilation of shots of adaptive athlete Vasu Sojitra speeding down a mountain using a three-track ski system, designed for amputee athletes, which involves one full ski and two handheld outriggers. The shots are strikingly intense as they combine scenic beauty and speed with unconventional ski technology. The film includes several similarly astounding shots of the group of diverse athletes heli-skiing in the Chugach Mountains of Alaska. Drone footage captures the vastness of snow-drenched mountains, amongst which the individual skiers and their tracks are the only specks of color.

After "The Approach 2," Prevot led an audience Q&A with Cleary and cast members Sojitra and Sophia Rouches, who were in attendance at the screening. When asked about their experience filming, the panelists reflected on their increased confidence, despite facing some of the same prejudices time and time again. For example, when the group was boarding a helicopter to heli-ski, one of the helicopter employees openly doubted Sojitra's competence. "The guy looked at Vasu and gave him an up and down and was like, are you going to be... okay? And he was like, 'Yeah, any other questions?'" Cleary recalled.

Reflecting a similar impact of lack of visibility, Rouches remembered the anxiety she felt before attempting a flip off of the Mount Baker road gap in Washington, knowing that only a couple of women had accomplished the feat. Although it's important for all audiences to hear these stories, it's clear that the group's efforts are especially targeted towards communities that, "don't look like maybe, many of the people in this room," Sojitra pointed out. The solution Sojitra proposes is continuing to create more seats at the table. "Just keep going and just attract more companies, more people, do a lot more screenings and just keep trying to put our message out there," he said.

Following the Q&A was "Nexus," a film that follows multiple groups of women skiers as they reflect on the role skiing has played in their families and relationships. Sasha Dingle and Krystin Norman are the daughters of sisters who emigrated from Vietnam in the 1970s and unexpectedly fell in love with skiing. Today, familial love for the sport is what keeps Dingle and Norman close. Like "The Approach 2." "Nexus" draws a profound balance between introspection and nail-biting action shots. One highlight is a drone shot of Veronica Paulsen backflipping off of Corbet's Couloir at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, one of the steepest runs in North America. Paulsen was the first woman to complete the achievement and was crowned "Queen of Corbet's" in 2020. Intense moments like these, coupled with difficult conversations about representation from Dingle and Norman, are interwoven with interviews with Margo Krisjansons and Jane Gallie, two Jackson Hole, Wyo. locals and employees of Exum Mountain Guides. Krisjansons and Gallie, both well into their sixties, reflect on their journeys through the gender biases of the outdoor industry, while throwing in lighthearted jokes along the way.

Neither film shies away from the goofy moments shared by their crews or neglects to show the crashes and falls of cast members. Unlike other outdoor films, when an athlete didn't complete a run flawlessly or didn't land a jump as planned, the tone remained triumphant. This theme is perfectly exemplified in "Nexus" when athlete and artist Brooklyn Bell, who appeared in both films, falls what appears to be dozens of yards down a steep exposed grade. The event perfectly frames the scene as one of frustration and regret, yet when Bell meets her friend Michelle Parker at the end of the line, covered in snow, she seems as excited as ever to keep going. Later in the film, Bell expresses that for her, joy is the ultimate form of resistance. The theme is one that was strong throughout the films and amongst audience members, who seemed joyful to be celebrating another season of skiing, while simultaneously striving to improve the community they love.

MEN'S SOCCER FALLS IN NCAA FIRST ROUND

COURTESY OF BRIAN FOLEY
Jordan Saint-Louis '24 scored one and assisted the other goal in Middlebury's 2--3 loss to Rowan University.

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

The men's soccer team bowed out of the NCAA tournament after a 2–3 defeat to Rowan University. The team also finished the season as NESCAC semifinalists.

The Panthers fell behind early in the contest on Saturday, giving up the first goal just 10 minutes into the match. Rowan's lead was short-lived, however, with Jordan Saint-Louis '24 converting a penalty kick to level the game less than 90 seconds later. A glancing header from Kyle Nilsson '25 in response from Saint-Louis brought the Panthers into halftime to a 2–1 lead.

Rowan came out fighting in the second half, creating several opportunities before scoring from close range 17 minutes after the break. With just over 20 minutes to go, Rowan scored a crucial goal, taking advantage of a free kick opportunity and snatching the lead. The Panthers looked to force overtime, led by both Saint-Louis and Michael McFarlane '22.5, fighting at every opportunity before the clock ran out. Yet, Rowan's defense stayed strong, sending the Panthers home with nothing to show for a gritty performance.

The result may not have been the one the Panthers were hoping for following last season's NCAA quarterfinals appearance, but they can head into the offseason with their heads held high. The team demonstrated signs of greatness over the course of the season, dominating conference rival Trinity 5–0, earning a playoff win against Hamilton following a loss to the conference opponent during the regular season and forcing overtime against a ranked Amherst before their departure from the NESCAC tournament. The team garnered numerous individual honors: goalkeeper Ryan Grady '23.5 moved into first on the program's all-time list of clean sheets, coupled with second team All-NESCAC accomplishments by McFarlane and Saint-Louis. With a core group of younger players returning next season, the Panthers will be back in the 2023 season with something to prove.

Women's crew buoyed by strong performance at the Head of the Charles

By RYAN HEINZERLING
Staff Writer

The women's crew team capped off an outstanding season with a strong team performance at the Head of the Charles regatta, an event that bills itself as one of the largest regattas in the world.

The women's varsity eight finished firmly in the middle of the pack, arriving 17th out of 36 teams, while the varsity four finished an impressive 12th out of 35 boats. Both boats earned automatic re-entries into next year's regatta on account of their performances. The season also saw the varsity eight and four place 13th and 15th respectively at the Head of the Fish, as well as ninth and third at the Quinsigamond Snake Regatta.

With an encouraging fall season behind them, the women's crew team is looking forward to the spring as a chance to prove themselves at the American Collegiate Rowing Association (ACRA) Championships. Sydney Rogers '25 has high hopes for the team, particularly for the team's younger members.

"All the novices this year are picking up the sport quickly," Rogers said. "I'm excited to watch them progress more in the spring season."

"I would say the [past] season was super successful. All the boats improved a ton, and people learned a lot individually as rowers," she said. "All our coxswains are truly the MVP's because we wouldn't have any successes without their guidance."

With respect to the ACRA Championships, the team is looking to build off strong results last year in Tennessee, when the varsity eight placed second in their heat to bring home hard-earned medals. With an improved roster, Rogers thinks the team can do even better this year.

An impressive season all around suggests there is a promising future in store for the Panthers at ACRA this upcoming spring.

PFL Weekly

By COLE SIEFER, DAN URCHUK, BEN WAGNER & SAM MCGARRAHAN
Podcast Hosts

Amazing feats, crazy wins and all the accolades you could want. This past week has been a great week for Middlebury Athletics. The field hockey team is headed to the NCAA Final Four. Bob Ritter's last game on the gridiron as head football coach was a high scoring contest against Tufts, landing the Panthers in second place in the NESCAC. The men's and women's cross country teams competed in a gritty race at regionals, with the men's team punching their ticket to nationals. Men's soccer's season came to a close as Michael McFarlane '22.5 and Jordan Saint-Louis '24 earned All-NESCAC second-team honors. The winter season nears with openers for swim, ice hockey and basketball coming up this weekend. Check out our episode this week for this and an interview with Men's Cross Country's Alec Gironda '24 as his team prepares for nationals.

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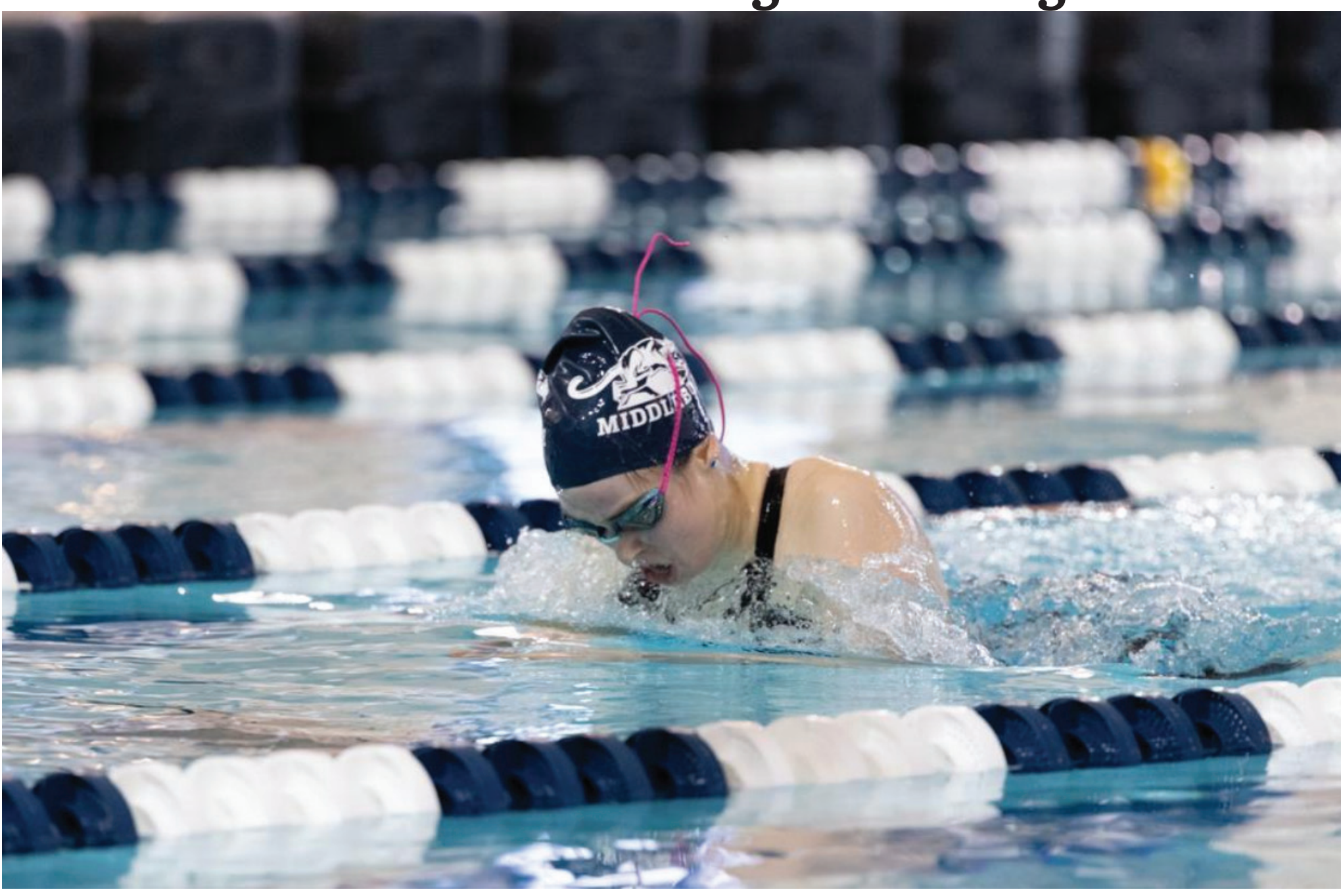
CAROLINE HARDING

Seven questions with Maggie Reynolds '24, women's swimming and diving



Courtesy of Middlebury Athletics

Maggie Reynolds '24 takes a breath during the breaststroke.

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Maggie Reynolds '24 from Slingerlands, N.Y. is kicking off her junior season on the women's swimming and diving team. Reynolds, a history major and Spanish and political science double minor, primarily swims the 200 and 400 meter individual medley (IM). In this installment of seven questions, she discusses how she got into the sport, pre-race rituals and her favorite song to swim to.

Charlie Keohane: How did you start swimming?

Maggie Reynolds: I started swimming competitively when I was eight on my team that I swam on all through elementary school, middle school and high school. I had been doing summer swim lessons prior to that, and I was always really into it and wanted to do more than just the lessons. I had really pushed my parents and begged them to join the team, and I did going into third grade.

CK: What do you like about your events?

MR: My primary events are the 200 and 400 IM, and then I also do a little freestyle and breaststroke. I like those events because I like swimming all the strokes, so it's fun to train all the strokes. I'm also much more of an endurance swimmer than a sprinter, so I feel like those play to my strengths.

CK: Do you have any pre-race rituals you like to follow?

MR: I like to drink Gatorade right before I warm up. Everyone warms up in the pool before their race. A lot of people like to get out and dry off before they go to the blocks, but I like to swim in the pool until the last second possible and just go up to the blocks right before my heat. It helps me to just walk right over and start swimming.

CK: What drew you to the Middlebury team specifically?

MR: I came on a recruit trip here, and I really liked the inclusive vibe of the team. Everyone really wanted to make conversation with me and not just talk to each other, even when I was just visiting. I also like how people are involved with a lot of things inside and outside the team, and there's a good balance of not just being an athlete.

CK: What can we expect from the Panthers this swim season?

MR: I think it's going to be a really good season for us. We have a lot of fast first years coming in and a really strong sophomore class. I think we're looking to improve on our position in the NESCAC from last year.

CK: What is something people might not know about the sport?

MR: People might not know how many hours we spend practicing for a race that lasts maybe between 1 and 5 minutes. We practice for like three and a half hours a day and so many yards for such a short race.

CK: What is your swimming power anthem?

MR: "Style" by Taylor Swift.

Reynolds and the Panthers are competing in their first meet of the season this Saturday, Nov. 19 at 1 p.m. in the Middlebury Natatorium against Connecticut College.

Editor's Note: This interview has been lightly edited for clarity and brevity. Maggie Reynolds '24 is the Senior Local Editor for The Middlebury Campus.

The special moments of a difficult season for women's rugby

By RYAN HEINZERLING
Staff Writer

Women's rugby faced a difficult, albeit gratifying, season of rebuild this fall. With a 1–5 finish, Captain Emma Doubman '22 said it felt like an in-between sort of season.

"We didn't have a lot of strong results," Doubman said. "But our improvement throughout the year, from the first game to the last — there was a huge difference."

Half the squad this year was comprised of rookies, making growth the Panthers' primary focus this season. The team faced additional struggles with the format of play in the fall, often competing with barely enough players to meet the roster requirement following a slew of injuries. Looking forward, Doubman expects that the seven-a-side format of play in the spring season will allow the team to better overcome injuries than this season.

Although the many injuries posed obstacles for the team, it paved the way for rookies to establish themselves on the team and make many older players, like Doubman, forget it was their first time playing rugby.

"Scoring our first try was very exciting," she said. "It's really [special] to watch people score their first try."

The Panthers faced some tough opponents in their opening fixtures, failing to score in the first two matches. In the third game of the season, however, despite going on to lose to St. Michaels, the team was finally able to celebrate their first try as a team, showing their determination in the face of a difficult season.

On a small team like women's rugby, moments like these can go a long way to build the team's chemistry. Doubman was quick to highlight the team's positivity and cohesive nature, making every bonding moment that much sweeter. Now, with the fall season firmly in the past, the women's rugby team is looking ahead to their winter training, where they hope to continue their close relationship with the men's team as they strive for big results in the spring season.

Courtesy of Jacqueline Tran

The women's rugby team celebrates their first try of the season.

Middlebury field hockey boasts three All-NESCAC honorees as they advance to NCAA Final Four

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

Approaching the end of a dominant season, there is no doubt that Middlebury has more than a few critical players that have contributed to the success they have found on the field; yet, this year, three stars, Katie George '23.5, Amy Griffin '24.5 and Charlotte Marks '23.5 stand out as All-Conference winners for their consistent and unrelenting efforts on the field, guiding the team to its fifth consecutive NESCAC title, 50th NCAA tournament win and to the NCAA Final Four, with a chance to compete for another National Championship.

Returning as the reigning rookie of the year, Griffin didn't let up this season, topping the NESCAC in points scored and earning a spot on the all-NESCAC first team. Griffin was humble in her acceptance of the award. "The other players on both the first and second teams are all skilled, and I am grateful to have been selected among them," she said. Griffin solidified her status as one of the top attacking threats in the division this weekend, tallying three assists against MIT (16–5) in an 8–0 victory to advance to the NCAA quarterfinals and scoring one goal on Sunday against Trinity College (15–5) to lead the team to the semifinals.

Across the team, support from one another and the coaching staff seems to be working wonders to push the team forward, both as a unit and on the individual level. As a defender, Marks' individual success can't be reflected by dominating the leaderboards in goals or assists. Rather, her steadfast job protecting goalie Grace Harlan '22.5 earned her second-team All-NESCAC honors. Marks was quick to credit her teammates for her success.

"It's hard to choose any one person on our team for NESCAC awards, as so many deserve the recognition," Marks said. "I'm feeling lucky that I have the most amazing teammates who push me to get better every day in practice and help me succeed in my role."

Following a win with authority against MIT, anticipation was high for the matchup against NESCAC rival Trinity (15–5), who handed the Panthers their only loss of the season earlier this fall. "We knew we had what it took to beat Trinity," Marks said. "We just had to go out there and play our game."

The high-stakes of tournament play, coupled with Middlebury's desire for revenge, resulted in a scrappy first quarter with both teams battling for possession. Goals from Sadie LeStage'23.5 (assisted by Hanna Medwar '25), George and Griffin ultimately led the Panthers to a decisive win on their home field, sending the Bantams home and clinching a spot in the NCAA Final Four.

Looking ahead to the matchup against Rowan University (21–1), Marks said the Panthers' primary focus will be to shut down key opposition players with clean defense and to play a controlled possession game.

After a long season of top-tier field hockey, the road to New Jersey has finally become a reality; Middlebury (19–1) will take on Rowan University this Friday, Nov. 18 at 3 p.m. The Panthers have had answers for every obstacle thrown at them this season. Now, they face their biggest challenge yet, as they search for a record fifth consecutive national title.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Middlebury Field Hockey celebrates the victory, with gooalie Grace Harlan '22.5 in the middle.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Middlebury defeated MIT 8-0.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Charlotte Marks '23.5 moves the ball upfield in an 8–0 win over MIT.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Middlebury will take on Rowan University on Friday.

Middlebury Football finishes strong season

By JACK MCGUIRE
Sports Editor

The Middlebury football team finished the year 7–2 as the NESCAC runner-up behind Trinity College (9–0). This year showed a significant improvement from the Panthers' 3–6 season last year, marking a solid final stretch for Bob Ritter, who completed his final year as head coach.

For the players, the rediscovered success of the program is a result of the team's improved culture and chemistry. After the Covid-19 pandemic canceled the 2020 football season, it took some time for the players to get used to playing with each other.

"I think last year was still a really get-to-know-your-teammates year," wide receiver and defensive back Donovan Wood '24 said. "This year, we bought in, and we all trust each other."

As important as culture and chemistry are to a team, it still does not explicitly dictate how a team plays. The talent and hard work of countless Middlebury players on the gridiron helped elevate them this season.

On the offensive side of the ball, Cole Kennon '23.5 had a fantastic year as the team's primary quarterback. In six games played, he threw 24 touchdowns and only four interceptions and averaged 309 passing yards per game. Kennon's most prolific game came at home against Hamilton, when he threw six touchdown passes and no interceptions.

To help support Kennon, the Panthers had countless offensive weapons. LeeCharles McNeil '23 served as Middlebury's primary running back averaging 53.78 rushing yards per game; notably, McNeil had two games with over 100 rushing yards. Middlebury's receiving corps was also elite, with three players averaging over 60 receiving yards per game. Wood led the group with a monster season of 11 touchdowns and an average of 104.22 receiving yards per game. Captain Greg Livingston '22.5, also had a fantastic season, catching five touchdowns and averaging just under 80 receiving yards per game.

"Greg Livingston was our only senior captain this year and played a crucial role in keeping our team together," Wood said.

On defense, the Panthers also played very well. Notably, defensive back Finn Muldoon '23 led the team with 82 tackles, and Tomas Kenary '24 led the team with six sacks.

COURTESY OF WILL COSTELLO
The football team finished second in the NESCAC.

As successful as Middlebury was this season, it ended on a somewhat somber note after Ritter coached his last game at the helm of the Middlebury football team. Ritter has been Middlebury's head football coach since 2000 and has won three NESCAC championships during that time.

"I don't think [Coach Ritter leaving] really hit any of us until the very end," Wood said. "I feel like we've all been with Coach Ritter, and he has been the face of our program for so long, so we really wanted to do something special. I'm glad we did."

Even though Ritter won't formally be there, the Middlebury football team has high expectations for next year.

"We're only losing around five starters from this season to next season," Wood said. "Our team will still be relatively the same, and we should be even better than we were before."